

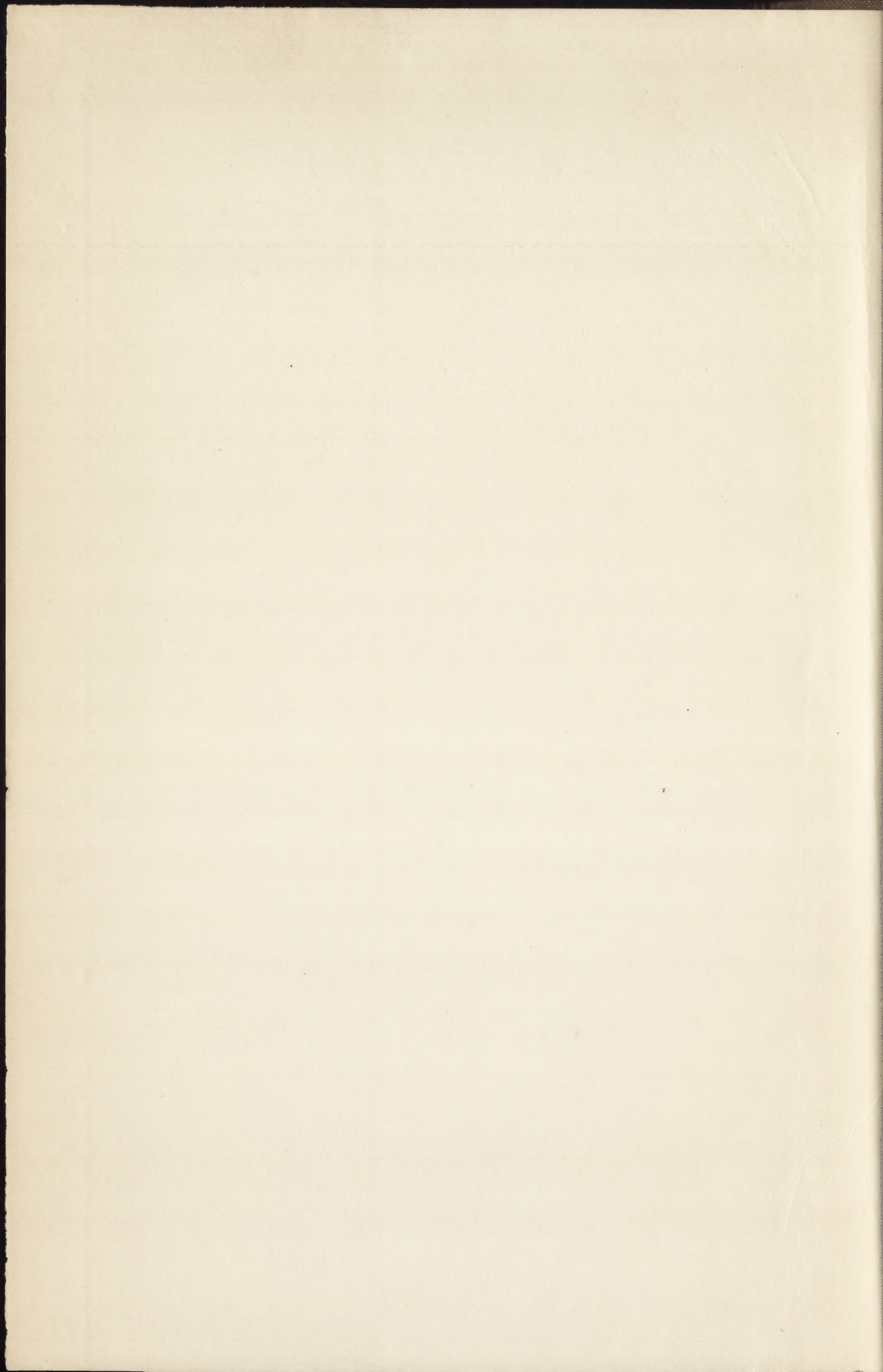


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Marion Dean Ross  
October 15, 1935



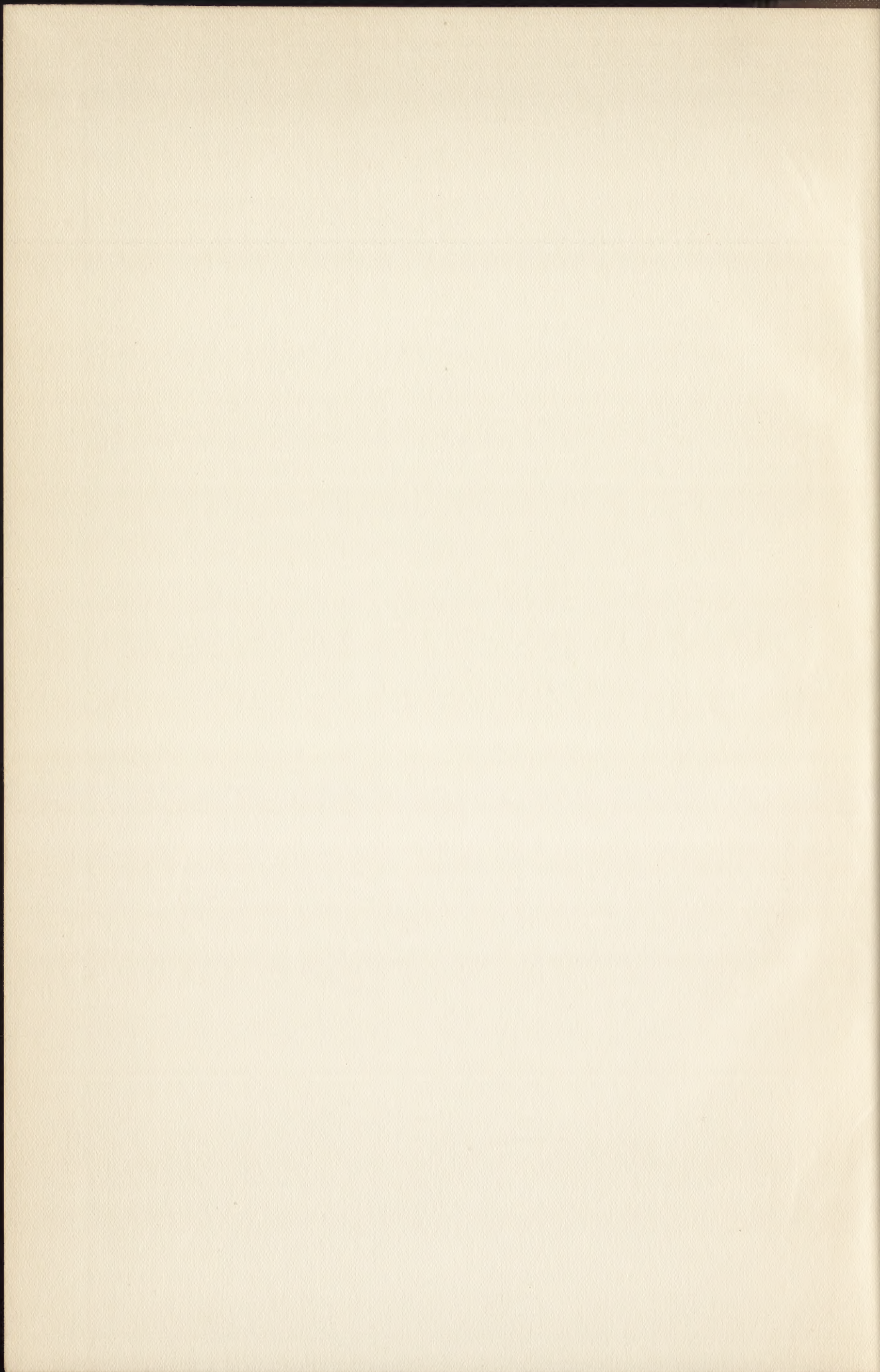




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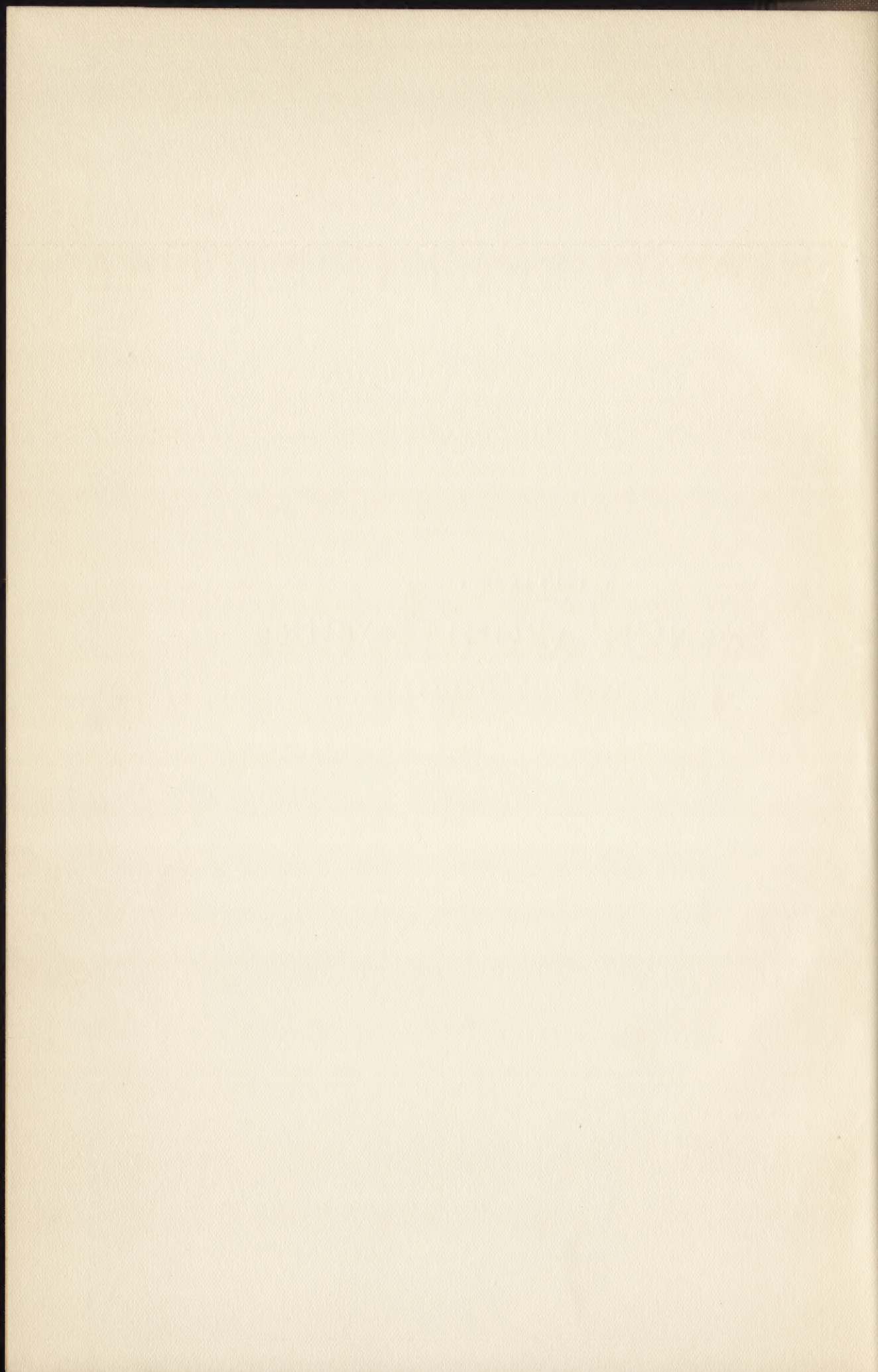




A HISTORY OF  
FRENCH ARCHITECTURE

FROM 1661 TO 1774







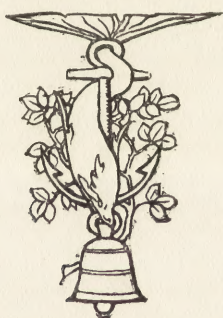
# A HISTORY OF FRENCH ARCHITECTURE

FROM THE DEATH OF MAZARIN  
TILL THE DEATH OF LOUIS XV  
1661-1774

BY  
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OF FRENCH ARCHITECTURE, 1496-1661"



WITH DRAWINGS BY THE AUTHOR AND  
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# CONTENTS

	PAGE
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS . . . . .	xi
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	xv
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	xxiii
A LIST OF SURINTENDANTS DES BÂTIMENTS AND OF DIRECTEURS DE L'ACADÉMIE DE FRANCE À ROME . . .	xxix

## CHAPTER

### I. LOUIS XIV, COLBERT, AND THE ACADEMIES . . . . . I

Development of French Architecture continuous from François I till death of Louis XV—Mazarin and the arts: change of direction after his death—Louis XIV: his character—Colbert—The Academies and the *Maîtrise*—The Academy of Painting and Sculpture (1648)—Revolt of the students—Reorganization of the Academy—Its abolition and re-establishment.

### II. THE ACADEMY OF ARCHITECTURE . . . . . 12

Colbert's *petit conseil*—The new buildings of the Louvre and the "Conseil des Bâtimens"—The Academy of Architecture (1671): its duties, organization, and discussions—The Academicians practical men: members paid and *Architectes du Roi*—Examination of quarries, of bridges and foundations—The aqueduct of Maintenon—Academy reorganized 1699, abolished 1793, re-established 1795—Its study of technique, and conception of architecture as a science—Value of its educational work.

### III. THE FRENCH ACADEMY AT ROME . . . . . 25

Henri IV and a "pépinière d'ouvriers"—Colbert and a state-aided establishment in Rome—Errard the first Director (1666)—Statutes of the French Academy in Rome—The Director also an agent for purchases—Noël Coypel—Errard's return—La Teulière (1683-1699) and Louvois and J. H. Mansart—Houasse and J. H. Mansart—Disastrous administration—Poerson and D'Antin—Wleughels—De Troy—Correspondence of the Directors—Colbert's aim to make France supreme in the arts by means of state-aided academies and manufactures.



## IV. THE ROYAL BUILDING STAFF . . . . . 43

Disorganized state of finances under Mazarin—Methods of contract under François I—Lack of proper control—Colbert's reforms—The "surintendant"—The "intendants"—The "contrôleurs"—The "trésoriers"—"Officiers des bastimens"—"Officiers qui ont gages"—Architects assigned to specific buildings—Buildings carried out by measure and value to agreed schedule—Materials found by the State, and prices—Conditions of labour—Faults of Colbert's organization too many officers, too much nepotism—A Note on the Aqueduct of Maintenon.

## V. LOUIS LE VAU, FRANÇOIS D'ORBAY, RICHER, LAMBERT, AND THE LAST OF THE OLD REGIME . . . . . 55

Three periods in the reign of Louis XIV—Le Vau represents transition from Mazarin to Colbert—Louis Le Vau (1612-1670)—Hôtel Lambert—Hôtel Salé—Vaux le Vicomte, its design—Le Vau "premier architecte du Roi"—Vincennes—Rincy—S. Sepolcre—Houses for M. Henselin and Hôtel de Lyonne, Paris—His work at the Louvre, at Versailles, and the Tuileries—The Collège des Quatre Nations—Le Vau a competent practitioner, but not a great artist—François Le Vau—François D'Orbay—His work at Lyons and Montpellier—D'Orbay *filz*—Richer—Houses in Paris—Lambert, Contrôleur des Bâtiments.

## VI. THE COMPLETION OF THE LOUVRE. BERNINI AND CLAUDE PERRAULT . . . . . 68

Colbert's anxiety to complete the Louvre—Le Vau—Bernini invited—The intrigues of Charles Perrault—Bernini's designs impracticable—His return to Rome—Claude Perrault's design adopted—His two schemes—The east front, the double columns, and the construction of the masonry—Hostile criticisms by François Blondel—Perrault's originality—Undoubtedly the author of the design—The work abandoned and not completed till 1755.

## VII. CLAUDE PERRAULT. FRANÇOIS BLONDEL . . . . . 84

The Observatory, Paris—The Arc de Triomphe du Trône (1668)—The work abandoned—Referred to the Academy of Architecture (1685)—Perrault ignored—Hostility of the Academy—Intrigues at the Court—Death of Perrault (1688)—His learning and ability—Comparison with Wren—François Blondel commands a galley—Tutor—Professor of mathematics—Diplomat—Engineer—His bridge-building—A member of the Academy of Science—First Director of the Academy of Architecture—Scheme for the improvement of Paris—The Gates of Paris—S. Bernard—S. Antoine and Goujon—S. Denis—Does little architectural work—His *Cours d'Architecture*—Uncompromising advocate of classical architecture and authority—His theories of art confused and illogical—His controversy with Perrault—A learned but acrimonious pedant.



# CONTENTS

vii

## CHAPTER

PAGE

### VIII. ERRARD, MIGNARD, LA VALFENIÈRE, AND LE PAUTRE . . . 99

Charles Errard, born 1606—Studies at Rome—Work at the Palais Royal—Association with Roland Fréart de Chambray—Helps to found the Academy of Painting and Sculpture—A Rector of the Academy—Appointed the first Director of the French Academy in Rome—Death, 1689—His marriage—Designs Church of the Assumption, Rue S. Honoré, Paris—Its faults—Le Brun and Church of S. Nicholas du Chardonnet and the French order—Pierre Mignard, born 1640—Painter and architect—Drawings of old buildings in Languedoc and Provence—Member of Academy of Architecture—Retires to Avignon—The Abbey of Montmajour, near Arles—Death, 1725—Avignon and Royer de la Valfenièrre—Anthoine Le Pautre—Port Royal—His "Œuvres"—The Hôtel de Beauvais—S. Ouen—S. Cloud—Superseded at Clagny by J. H. Mansart—His quarrel with his brother—His ability as an architect—The meaning of architecture.

### IX. COTTART, RICHER, ROBELIN, DE LISLE, LEVÉ, GIRARD, GOBERT, LE DUC, GITTARD . . . . . 118

Cottart and the Hôtel de Bisseuil—Hôtel de Ville, Troyes—Church at Villacerf—His pension—The Minor Men: Richer—Houses in Paris—Robelin—The Hôtel de Léon—De L'Isle—The Hôtel du Grand Prieur—Levé—Girard—S. Cloud—Gobert an Academician—The Trianon of S. Cloud—Difficulty of disentangling these men—Le Duc—Church of the Val de Grâce—S. Louis en l'Ile—Hôtel Falconi—Gittard—Choir of S. Sulpice—S. Jacques et S. Philippe du Haut Pas—Houses in Paris—Chantilly—Connection with J. H. Mansart—The French architects and their workmen.

### X. BRUANT, BULLET . . . . . 130

Hereditary callings and monopoly of the official architects and tradesmen—Liberal Bruant—His family "de bonne bourgeoisie Parisienne"—La Salpêtrière—Hôtel de Mars, ou des Invalides—Fine design—Its faults—The Maison et Bureau of the Merchant Drapers, Paris—Superseded by Mansart—Death, 1697—Financial embarrassment—Pierre Bullet (1639)—Assistant to F. Blondel—Designs Porte S. Martin, the Quai Pelletier, and Church of the Noviciat Général des Dominicains—Academician and Architecte du Roi—Designs for bridges—Archbishop's Palace, Bourges—*L'Architecture pratique*—Issi—Houses in Paris—Bullet as an architect—Jacques Bruant, *fils*—Professor of Architecture—Hôtel de Belle-Isle—Liberal Bruant (nephew)—The Academy of Architecture a family affair.



XI. THE DRAUGHTSMEN: JEAN MAROT, DANIEL MAROT, JEAN LE PAUTRE, PIERRE LE PAUTRE, LE BLOND, BERAÏN, LE CLERC, ISRAËL SILVESTRE, AND ADAM PERELLE . . . 149

Jean Marot—The family—Prepares designs for the Louvre, houses in Paris, Palace Mannheim—His skill as a draughtsman—The "Petit Marot"—The "Grand Marot"—His designs for grottoes—Daniel Marot—Flies to Holland—Designed gardens, Hampton Court—His drawings and designs—Jean Le Pautre—His invention and draughtsmanship—The value of his work—Pierre Le Pautre—Draughtsman and engraver—Use made of him by J. H. Mansart—Jean Beraïn—The Court draughtsman and designer—Sebastian Le Clerc—His plate of the building of the Louvre—Israel Silvestre—His topographical work—Mariette's account—The Perelles—Adam Perelle—The best of the topographical draughtsmen—Their disappearance—The Academy's insistence on accurate draughtsmanship—Finally spoilt by spurious archaeology—Effect of this on architecture.

XII. ANDRÉ LE NÔTRE . . . 164

Le Nôtre and Saint-Simon—Appointed to the Tuileries Gardens—Vaux le Vicomte—Methods of Le Nôtre—Appointed "Contrôleur-Général des Bastimens"—The Gardens of Versailles—The use of water in French garden design—The Aqueduct of Maintenon—Le Nôtre and Mansart—S. Germain-en-Laye—Chantilly and the water garden—Cost of these gardens—Sceaux—Death, 1700—His visit to Italy and the Pope—Member of the Academy of Architecture—Chevalier of S. Michel—His character—High esteem of Saint-Simon and Louis XIV.

XIII. JULES HARDOUIN MANSART . . . 181

The problem of Mansart's career—His relationship to François Mansart—Supersedes Le Pautre at Clagny—Entrusted with Versailles (1676)—His advancement by Louis XIV—The King and the Royal buildings—The earlier Versailles—Alterations made by Mansart—His methods with the King and lack of chivalry—His energy and adroitness—The cost of Versailles—Architecturally a failure—Saint-Simon's criticisms.

XIV. JULES HARDOUIN MANSART . . . 191

The Orangery at Versailles a masterpiece of design—The problem of its author—The sketch by Le Nôtre—The measured drawings by Desgodetz in Rome—The design of the Orangery so unlike the rest of the design of Versailles that another hand is suggested—Possibly Desgodetz under Mansart—Mansart made Comte de Sagonne—The Écuries and Grand Commun, Versailles—The Grand Trianon and the Trianon de Porcelaine—The episode of the "Fenêtre de Trianon" and Louvois—Marly—Its cost and the absurdity of its design.



# CONTENTS

ix

CHAPTER

PAGE

## XV. JULES HARDOUIN MANSART . . . . . 201

Mansart at Chantilly—His Philistinism—Supersedes Bruand at the Invalides and designs the Church of the Dome—Desgodetz employed in the design, but personal part taken in it by Mansart—Its plan—Comparison with St. Paul's—Resemblance to plan of Wren's rejected design—Faults of Mansart's design of the church of the Invalides—Inferiority to design of St. Paul's—L'Assurance employed at the Invalides—The "architecte sous clef"—The Hôtel de Ville at Arles—The Place des Victoires and the Place Vendôme—The chapel at Versailles—S. Cyr—Dampierre—The parish church, Versailles—Mansart becomes *surintendant*—The value of this appointment—Mansart's death—The bridge at Moulins—Mansart and the Academy—Estimate of Mansart as a man—His unscrupulousness and disloyalty to colleagues—Mansart as an artist—Different opinions—A capable but unscrupulous man and a bad artist.

## APPENDIX. ON THE FLAT VAULTING OF THE ROUSSILLON . . . 221



#### ERRATA IN VOL. I

Page 54, line 11 from foot, *for* " $1\frac{1}{2}$ " *read* " $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches."

Page 54, last line, *for* "pp. 70-75, 76-78, 84-90" *read* "pp. 75, 76, 78, 84, 88, 89."

Page 56, note 3, line 2, *for* "Dullin" *read* "Dulin."

Page 108, line 23, *for* "Commission" *read* "commission."

Page 132, note 2, *for* "'Comptes,' 1658," *read* "'Comptes,' i, 658"; *and for* "Clement" *read* "Clermont."

Page 175, line 1, *for* "3,200" *read* "2,666," *and for* "40" *read* "33."

Page 181, line 12 from foot, *for* "Jean" *read* "Jules."



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PLATE	TO FACE PAGE
HEAD-PIECE (INTRODUCTION). From J. F. Blondel's "Maisons des Plaisance" . . . . .	<i>on p.</i> xv
TAIL-PIECE. From J. F. Blondel's "Maisons des Plaisance" . . . . .	xxii
I. FRONTISPIECE OF PERRAULT'S TRANSLATION OF VITRUVIUS . . . . .	1
HEAD-PIECE. From F. Blondel's "Cours d'Architecture" . . . . .	<i>on p.</i> 1
II. VAUX LE VICOMTE. Ground Plan . . . . .	56
III. VAUX LE VICOMTE. Front View . . . . .	57
VAUX LE VICOMTE. From the Garden . . . . .	57
IV. VINCENNES AS ENLARGED BY LE VAU . . . . .	60
RINCY . . . . .	60
V. CHÂTEAU DE TURNY. Ground Plan . . . . .	<i>at pp.</i> 60, 61
VI. CHÂTEAU DE TURNY. Back and Front Elevations . . . . .	„ 60, 61
VII. S. SEPOLCRE, NEAR TROYES. Section through Court . . . . .	61
VIII. THE LOUVRE, SOUTH FRONT, AS REBUILT BY LE VAU . . . . .	62
IX. THE TUILERIES: THE FRONT, AS REMODELLED BY LE VAU . . . . .	<i>at pp.</i> 62, 63
X. THE TUILERIES: GENERAL VIEW FROM THE FRONT . . . . .	„ 62, 63
XI. THE TUILERIES: PAVILION . . . . .	63
XII. THE "INSTITUT DE FRANCE," OR COLLEGE OF THE FOUR NATIONS . . . . .	64
XIII. BERNINI'S DESIGN FOR THE LOUVRE. (J. Marot.) Ground Plan . . . . .	72
XIV. BERNINI'S DESIGN FOR THE LOUVRE. West and East Elevations . . . . .	<i>at pp.</i> 72, 73
XV. BERNINI'S DESIGN FOR THE LOUVRE. Section through the Great Court . . . . .	73
XVI. PERRAULT'S SCHEME FOR REBUILDING THE LOUVRE. Plan No. 2 . . . . .	76
XVII. PERRAULT'S SCHEME FOR REBUILDING THE LOUVRE. East Elevation . . . . .	<i>at pp.</i> 76, 77
XVIII. PERRAULT'S SCHEME FOR REBUILDING THE LOUVRE. Plan No. 1 . . . . .	<i>at pp.</i> 76, 77
XIX. THE BUILDING OF THE LOUVRE. DRAWN BY S. LE CLERC . . . . .	<i>at pp.</i> 76, 77
XX. THE MACHINERY FOR RAISING THE STONES OF THE PEDI- MENT . . . . .	77
XXI. L'ARC DE TRIOMPHE DU TRÔNE . . . . .	81
XXII. PORTE S. ANTOINE . . . . .	88
PORTE S. DENIS . . . . .	88
XXIII. CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION, PARIS. Elevation and Section . . . . .	105



xii A HISTORY OF FRENCH ARCHITECTURE

PLATE	TO FACE PAGE
XXIV. A CEILING BY A. LE PAUTRE ("Œuvres," Pl. IX) . . .	112
XXV. DESIGN FOR A MANSION BY A. LE PAUTRE. Ground Plan . . .	112, 113
XXVI. DESIGN FOR A MANSION. Half Elevation and Section . . .	112, 113
XXVII. DESIGN FOR A MANSION. End Elevation . . .	112, 113
XXVIII. HÔTEL DE BEAUVAIS, BY A. LE PAUTRE. Elevation . . .	113
XXIX. HÔTEL DE BEAUVAIS, BY A. LE PAUTRE. Ground Plan and First Floor . . .	114
XXX. S. CLOUD. General View . . .	115
XXXI. HÔTEL DE BISSEUIL. Elevation and First Floor Plan . . .	118
XXXII. HOUSE IN RUE DE CLERY, DESIGNED BY J. RICHER. Eleva- tion and Ground Plan . . .	120
XXXIII. HOUSE DESIGNED FOR M. PASQUIER, BY J. RICHER. Eleva- tion to Court . . .	120-121
XXXIV. HOUSE DESIGNED FOR M. PASQUIER. Section . . .	120, 121
XXXV. HÔTEL DE LÉON, BY ROBELIN . . .	121
XXXVI. THE HOUSE OF THE GRAND PRIOR. Front and Elevation in Court . . .	122
XXXVII. S. CLOUD: ENTRANCE . . .	123
S. CLOUD: THE CASCADES . . .	123
XXXVIII. S. MAUR: ENTRANCE AND GARDEN FRONT . . .	126
XXXIX. CHANTILLY. Bird's-eye View . . .	127
XL. LA SALPÊTRIÈRE, BY BRUANT . . .	130
PORTE S. MARTIN, BY BULLET . . .	130
XLI. BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE HÔTEL DES INVALIDES . . .	134, 135
XLII. HÔTEL DES INVALIDES . . .	134, 135
XLIII. THE HALL OF THE MERCHANT DRAPERS . . .	135
XLIV. FRONTISPIECE, CHÂTEAU D'ISSI, BY BULLET . . .	137
FRONTISPIECE, ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE AT BOURGES . . .	137
XLV. CHÂTEAU D'ISSI. Elevation and Ground Plan . . .	144
XLVI. HÔTEL DE BELLEISLE. Elevation and First Floor Plan. (From Blondel's "Arch. Franc.") . . .	146
XLVII. HOUSE FOR THE DUC DE MORTIMAR. Elevations and Plans . . .	147
XLVIII. JEAN MAROT'S DESIGN FOR THE LOUVRE . . .	150
XLIX. DESIGN FOR A PALACE AT MANNHEIM . . .	151
L. DESIGNS FOR TRIUMPHAL ARCHES, BY J. MAROT . . .	155
LI. PART OF CEILING, BY D. MAROT . . .	156, 157
LII. FRIEZES AND VASES, BY J. LE PAUTRE . . .	156, 157
LIII. A SINGERIE, BY BERAÏN. (From Destailleur, "Recueil") . . .	158
LIV. FONTAINEBLEAU, BY ADAM PERELLE . . .	162
LV. THE GROTTO, RUEL . . .	163
LVI. VAUX-LE-VICOMTE: THE CASCADES . . .	166
VAUX-LE-VICOMTE: THE GROTTO . . .	166
LVII. PLAN OF VERSAILLES, BY MENANT . . .	168, 169

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

xiii

PLATE		TO FACE PAGE
LVIII.	THE GARDENS OF THE TUILERIES. LE NÔTRE	<i>at pp.</i> 168, 169
LIX.	THE AQUEDUCT OF MAINTENON. From a drawing by Reginald Blomfield	169
LX.	VERSAILLES: LE BASSIN DE LATONE	170
	VERSAILLES: LE BASSIN D'APOLLON	170
LXI.	VERSAILLES: LE BASSIN D'ENCELADE	171
	VERSAILLES: LA FONTAINE DE LA RENOMMÉE	171
LXII.	S. GERMAIN-EN-LAYE	174
	S. CLOUD	174
LXIII.	CHANTILLY: THE GARDENS	175
LXIV.	CHANTILLY: THE WATER PARTERRE AND CANAL	176
	MEUDON: THE GARDENS	176
LXV.	SCEAUX: COLBERT'S HOUSE	177
	SCEAUX: THE GARDEN	177
LXVI.	CLAGNY: GENERAL PLAN	184
LXVII.	CLAGNY: ENTRANCE FRONT	<i>at pp.</i> 184, 185
LXVIII.	CLAGNY: GARDEN FRONT	" 184, 185
LXIX.	VERSAILLES: GENERAL VIEW FROM THE SOUTH-EAST, BY MENANT. (From Desmortain)	<i>at pp.</i> 184, 185
LXX.	VERSAILLES IN 1664	186
LXXI.	VERSAILLES: GARDEN FRONT AS LEFT BY LE VAU	<i>at pp.</i> 186, 187
	VERSAILLES: NORTH SIDE BEFORE MANSART'S ALTERA- TIONS	<i>at pp.</i> 186, 187
LXXII.	VERSAILLES: ENTRANCE AS LEFT BY LE VAU	" 186, 187
	VERSAILLES: GARDEN FRONT AS ALTERED	" 186, 187
LXXIII.	VERSAILLES: THE ENTRANCE FRONT AS ALTERED	187
LXXIV.	VERSAILLES: THE COLONNADE	192
LXXV.	VERSAILLES IN 1714, SHOWING THE ORANGERY. (From Desmortain)	<i>at pp.</i> 192, 193
LXXVI.	VERSAILLES: PLAN OF THE ORANGERY	193
LXXVII.	VERSAILLES: VIEW SHOWING THE FORECOURT AND STABLES	194
LXXVIII.	VERSAILLES: THE TRIANON DE PORCELAINE	195
	VERSAILLES: THE GRAND TRIANON	195
LXXIX.	MARLY: GENERAL PLAN	198
LXXX.	MARLY: VIEW FROM THE GARDENS	199
	MARLY: VIEW FROM THE ENTRANCE	199
LXXXI.	LES INVALIDES: THE CHURCH OF THE DOME	206
LXXXII.	LES INVALIDES: PLAN	<i>at pp.</i> 206, 207
LXXXIII.	LES INVALIDES: SECTION OF THE CHURCH OF THE DOME	207
LXXXIV.	PLACE DES VICTOIRES, PARIS	208
LXXXV.	PLACE VENDÔME	209
LXXXVI.	VERSAILLES: PLAN OF THE CHAPEL ABOVE THE GALLERY IN 1714.	<i>at pp.</i> 210, 211
LXXXVII.	VERSAILLES: SECTION THROUGH THE CHAPEL	" 210, 211



xiv      A HISTORY OF FRENCH ARCHITECTURE

PLATE	TO FACE PAGE
LXXXVIII. ST. CYR . . . . .	211
LXXXIX. LYCÉE MALHERBE, CAEN: THE DINING HALL. From a drawing by Reginald Blomfield . . . . .	at pp. 220, 221
XC. CONSTRUCTION OF FLAT VAULTS. J. F. Blondel ("Cours d'Architecture") . . . . .	at pp. 220, 221
TAIL-PIECE. From F. Blondel's "Cours" . . . . .	on p. 224



## INTRODUCTION

**I**N these two volumes I have endeavoured to complete my account<sup>1</sup> of French architecture of the old régime, taking up its history from the death of Mazarin, the date of the real beginning of the reign of Louis XIV, and carrying it down to the end of the reign of Louis XV. At that date the old tradition was rapidly breaking up. The gallant manner of the Gabriels<sup>2</sup> found no favour with the younger generation of architects. Prompted, and indeed almost compelled, by a most arbitrary theorist, men such as Chalgrin, Brongniart, Antoine, and Gondouin set about the revival of the antique in its most literal and pedantic form, and in so doing opened the way for those other revivalists, Gothic, "free Renaissance" and what not, who have since reduced the art of architecture to a game of battledore and shuttlecock. I make no apology for closing my study of French architecture at this date (1774) because this deliberate revival of classic seems to me wrong in principle. It is, however, necessary to define rather more closely what one means by revivalism. In a sense, all serious architecture at any period is a revival, inasmuch as it uses forms and methods of expression that have been used innumerable times before; but it is neither more nor less so than literature. In both cases the terms and idioms, the vocabulary of

<sup>1</sup> See "A History of French Architecture, 1494-1661," 2 vols., by Reginald Blomfield G. Bell and Sons, 1911.

<sup>2</sup> Where surnames are used for more than one individual I have followed the English idiom, *i.e.*, "the Gabriels," as opposed to the French, "Les Gabriel."



expression, are those already used, and yet a fresh synthesis can be created out of them again and again for the expression of new ideas. It all depends on how it is done. It is not in the words or technical details, but in the use of them, in the manner in which it bends them to its purpose, that genius finds itself, and in architecture more particularly, a very old and a very technical art, it is not the armour that makes the architect but the way he wears it. Nor is an architect any the less original because he makes use of the orders and all their following, provided always that they are with him a means to an end and not an end in themselves.

Now in the revival of the antique in the latter part of the eighteenth century, prompted in the first instance by amateurs, such as Caylus, and led by pedants such as Quatremère de Quincy, or again in the Gothic revival that succeeded it, whether in France or in England, the actual terminology became the end in itself. These revivalists insisted on details and combination of details, not because they were the best adapted for the practical purpose of the design, but because, unless they were reproduced *totidem verbis*, the design would fail to produce the illusion of a building erected 500, 800, or 2,000 years ago. In other words these men were the slaves of their own detail. They sacrificed the idea to its expression instead of treating the two as indissoluble. The only possible standpoint for an architect is, in my opinion, very different from this. In the first place a liberal interpretation should be given to the expression "practical purpose." The practical purpose of an architect is far from being identical with that of the engineer. The latter may arrive at fine artistic effect in his work, through its great scale, or its austere suggestion of fitness for purpose, but these are accidental effects. They were not in the engineer's mind when he set out on his task, though he is the more likely to attain them in proportion to the excellence of his design for its purpose. With the architect these effects are an important part of his problem. He is out not only to set up a building that will stand and provide shelter from the weather, and be practicable in working, but also to produce a definite impression of these excellent qualities in the minds of others. For this purpose he has to study deliberately the visible effect of his building inside and out, to consider its mass, proportions and grouping, to insist on certain parts of his design in preference to others, to calculate quantities of void and solid, light and shade, and in a less degree colour, to select the texture of his materials, to weigh carefully points of detail that would be simply irrelevant to the engineer, and it is on this ground that architecture may claim to be an art of a high intellectual order. It is clear that an architect who so addresses himself to his task, cannot

submit to the servile reproduction of buildings and details that were carried out under totally different conditions of purpose and climate. He will insist on being master in his own house, and not the servant of archaeology. Nor will he treat his architecture as mere dress and trappings, into which he can introduce a detail here and a detail there at will, without regard to their effect on the main conception. His idea and its expression must form an inseparable whole, and it is because they have been separated by the revivalist, and the expression or the mere style treated as paramount, that architecture has lost its hold on popular imagination. People do not believe in its sincerity. Revivalism has reduced architecture to the level of stage scenery.

Yet on the other hand an architect must be perfectly acquainted with the terminology of the past, just as before a man can write in any language he must be master of its vocabulary, its idioms and its grammar—and it is here that modern architecture too often fails. Good work has undoubtedly been done both here and elsewhere, but there are too many buildings about that show no knowledge of antiquity, and resemble too nearly the literary efforts of an uneducated and illiterate person. Unfortunately these architectural efforts remain, the *littera scripta* of bad taste and ignorance. The revivalist thought he had mastered the problem of architecture if he made no mistake in his orders or in his tracery, but he did at least study closely, if rather stupidly, and at his best he produced some scholarly exercises in Academic design. He was an enthusiast in his way, not a tradesman; in any case he was on a different footing from that of the man who plunges recklessly into design without serious study of its technique, and blunders about into solecism after solecism, with indifference and even unconsciousness that he is doing anything of the sort. It is, unfortunately, the fact that the greater number of modern buildings are merely commercial undertakings, in which architecture is the last consideration. It is scarcely, therefore, to be wondered at that nowadays technical competence in the art is not so zealously sought for or attained as it undoubtedly was both in France and England in the eighteenth century, and it has been reserved for the twentieth century to produce its own peculiar imposture. Practitioners of the arts have presented themselves who repudiate the whole of the past and make out of their own ineptitude the canons and standard of art. Meissonnier and Oppenord at their worst were not so offensive as these well-advertised apostles of incapacity. It was the signal merit of the architects of the old régime in France that they were far above these delusions. Consummate masters of technique, they cared nothing for the art of the virtuoso.



Architecture was to them a living art, the true companion of a joyous life, never unduly thrusting itself forward, yet always sympathetic, always fully competent for its purpose. It is of this beautiful art that I have endeavoured to give some account, and if I have ventured on criticisms here and there, they in no way detract from my profound admiration for its great examples.

My chief authorities are, as before, the old ones. In the first place, of course, the buildings themselves and contemporary illustrations: the views of Silvestre, Perelle, the Marots, Le Pautre, Le Clerc, and the French eighteenth-century engravers; and in the second place the historical authorities. In this period they are very complete, including as they do such documents as the "Comptes des Bâtiments du Roi," edited by Jules Guiffrey; the "Procès-Verbaux" of the Academy of Architecture, 1671-1711, admirably edited by M. Henri Lemonnier;<sup>1</sup> the "Correspondance des Directeurs de l'Académie de France à Rome," 1666-1793, edited by A. de Montaiglon and Jules Guiffrey; the "Archives de l'Art Français," begun in 1851 under the direction of M. de Chennévières and A. de Montaiglon; "Nouvelles Archives de l'Art Français," published by the Société de l'histoire de l'Art Français founded in 1872; the "Descriptions de Paris" of Germain Brice and Piganiol de la Force; J. F. Blondel's "Architecture Française," "Cours d'Architecture," and "Maisons de Plaisance"; Patte's "Monumens Erigés en France à la gloire de Louis XV," and "The Lives of French Architects" by Dezallier D'Argenville, the younger. There are many others, and a list of authorities will be found at the beginning of this volume, but a few words of explanation are necessary with regard to the "Comptes."

The "Comptes des Bâtiments du Roi" are the first and by far the most important authority for the whole of the reign of Louis XIV. Here we have the entry of every detail of the royal expenditure on buildings and gardens, the arts and manufactures of France, from the lordly emoluments of Mansart and the *Surintendants*, to the modest pensions of eminent men of letters and science, the still more modest fees of Academicians, and the salaries of the whole hierarchy of officials down to the wages of the mole catchers at Versailles and the men who handled the carp at Fontainebleau. The extent may be gathered from the fact that the entries occupy five volumes varying in length from 1,057 pages (vol. v) to 1,529 (vol. i) exclusive of the very valuable introduction by the editor, M. Jules Guiffrey. The series of "Comptes" begin with the administration of Colbert and continue in

<sup>1</sup> Only vols. i, ii, iii, have so far been issued.

uninterrupted sequence down to the year 1774. Only the "Comptes" of the reign of Louis XIV<sup>1</sup> have so far been published, and the first volume did not appear till 1881. Vol. ii was published in 1887, vol. iii in 1891, vol. iv in 1896, and vol. v in 1901.

M. Guiffrey carried out his task of editing and indexing this immense amount of material with a scholarship and self-sacrificing devotion beyond praise. It appears from the preface to the third volume that certain writers had criticized his labours as a waste of time, but students of the history of French art in the reign of Louis XIV will owe M. Guiffrey a debt of undying gratitude. His edition of the "Comptes" is an inexhaustible source of information, and beyond all comparison it is the paramount authority as to the busy life of that extraordinary reign. In the eighteenth century the wildest rumours were circulated as to the cost of the royal buildings. In the year 3 of the revolution, Volney, Professor of History at the École Normale, asserted that Versailles had cost 1,400 millions of francs,<sup>2</sup> and he assured his pupils that this would have been equivalent to four milliards, 600 millions in money of his time. In point of fact, the total cost of Versailles, including the Gardens, the Trianon, Clagny, and the Parish Church of Versailles, from 1664 to 1715 is shown by the "Comptes" to have been 64,580,565 livres 14 sous 6 deniers<sup>3</sup> (say thirteen million pounds).

<sup>1</sup> See vol. i, Introduction, pp. ix to xxi for a detailed account of the registers M. Guiffrey says that registers were to all intents inaccessible till 1848, when they were removed to the Archives Nationales.

<sup>2</sup> M. Guiffrey, Introduction, vol. i, p. xxii.

		livres	s.	d.
<sup>3</sup>	1664-1680 . . . .	25,725,836	4	8
	1681-1687 . . . .	13,975,900	3	1
		8,220,530	6	9
		1,862,273	14	7
	1688-1695 . . . .	1,508,606	15	10
		1,511,557	1	3
		958,071	17	4
	1696-1705 . . . .	3,490,407	19	7
		1,048,421	6	5
		394,246	15	10
		271,473	8	9
	1706-1715 . . . .	3,705,468	8	3
		1,050,059	19	0
		493,825	3	9
		50,600	0	0
		313,286	9	5
		<hr/>		
		64,580,565	14	6



I have discussed in the text the works of the younger Blondel. They are of great importance on account of the critical authority of Blondel himself, and of the insight they afford into the standpoint of the best French architects in the middle of the eighteenth century. Blondel was not an attractive writer and his style is wearisome; but he was an excellent critic and full of knowledge. Patte's "Monumens" is an instructive survey of the state of the arts in France at a slightly later date, and he bridges over the interval between Blondel and the revivalists of the antique in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Of Germain Brice, Piganiol de la Force, and Dezallier D'Argenville the younger, I have given some account in my earlier work.<sup>1</sup>

I would again express my great obligations to the researches of French scholars and historians: Anatole de Montaiglon, Jules Guiffrey, Dussieux, Herluison, M. Henri Lemonnier, M. Schneider (on Quatremère de Quincy) and others. Bauchal's "Dictionnaire . . . des Architectes Français" is useful up to a point, but it is not very accurate, and most of his statements require to be verified. As for Saint-Simon, the great qualities of his "Memoirs," as well as their defects, are too well-known to need any comment.

My remarks on the buildings are based on my personal observations of the buildings themselves. Dimensions given are in most cases taken by scale from the old engravings and the unit of measurement used is nearly always the "toise," which I have taken at 6 ft. English.

In regard to the cost of buildings, it is extremely difficult to arrive at an accurate ratio in modern money values. Sometimes the livre, sous, denier seem almost equivalent to our £ s. d.; at other times the livre is nearer the franc. Nor is the relative cost of the materials entirely trustworthy, as these may be affected by local and accidental conditions which diminish their value as a standard of prices. On the data available I incline to think the livre of Louis XIV would be equal in value to about five francs at pre-war prices.

For a list of members of the French Academy of Architecture see the list published in the "Archives de l'art Français," vol. i, pp. 419-429; the lists of the *Surintendants des Bâtiments* and the Directors of the French Academy at Rome are taken from de Montaiglon's Introduction to the Correspondence of the Directors.

In regard to illustrations, wherever possible I have used contem-

<sup>1</sup> "History of French Architecture, 1494-1661," pp. xiii, xv.

porary engravings, not only because they are in most cases admirable works of art, but because they give the best idea of the conditions with which the architect had to deal, and the manner in which the problem presented itself to his mind. Photographs are useful for details, but they are apt to give a misleading impression of the building as a whole, and details of architecture, apart from their context, are of no more real use to students than the fragments of buildings exhibited in museums.<sup>1</sup> The series of photographs issued by the *Commission des Monuments Historiques* is weak in examples of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the best collections, though by no means complete, are those of MM. Planat and Rumler in "Le Style Louis XIV" and "Le Style Louis XV" by M. Rumler. Other collections are referred to in the Bibliography.

In the reign of Louis XIV the arts came so completely under the control of the State that their history would be unintelligible without some account of the machinery of administration established by Colbert. This I have endeavoured to supply, and I have also examined in some detail the career of J. H. Mansart, as the embodiment of that system, and the most prominent figure among the artists of the reign of Louis XIV. As the result of my examination I remain quite sceptical as to his actual ability as an architect, though his amazing success and the disastrous importance of the part that he played in the art of his time are historical facts. Architecture presents peculiar difficulties in the way of attempts at exact appreciation. Pictures and statuary can be compared side by side, they can be studied in galleries and museums, and there is no particular need, at any rate, in the case of pictures, to take account of the actual conditions under which they were produced. But buildings are immovable; and only parts of them can be seen at once. In order to judge them fairly it is necessary to know something of the purpose for which they were built, the opportunities of the designer, and the limitations imposed on him. Nor is it always easy to trace the actual autograph impress of an architect's mind on his work. One can do it in the case of men of strong individuality: De l'Orme, François Mansart, A. J. Gabriel, Inigo Jones, Wren, Peruzzi or Michael Angelo; but these are the exceptions. The internal evidence available for critical appreciation is a good deal more obscure in architecture

<sup>1</sup> I refer to fragments of buildings, not to monuments complete in themselves, though these also lose half their value divorced from the surroundings for which they were designed, a point on which Quatremère de Quincy very properly insisted when he broke up Le Noir's Museum after the Revolution.



than it is in the sister arts, and writers have in consequence too often merely passed on what other people have said. It is the more necessary, therefore, to collect and sift carefully whatever evidence there is and form one's own conclusions, even if they do not always tally with the accepted legends.

REGINALD BLOMFIELD.

NEW COURT,  
TEMPLE,  
*November, 1920.*



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xxviii A HISTORY OF FRENCH ARCHITECTURE

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# A LIST OF SURINTENDANTS DES BÂTIMENTS AND OF DIRECTEURS DE L'ACADÉMIE DE FRANCE À ROME

LOUIS XIV. MAY 14, 1643. + SEPT. 1, 1715

## *Surintendants*

JEAN BAPTISTE COLBERT, Marquis de  
Seignelay. 1661— + Sept. 6, 1683.

FRANÇOIS MICHEL LES TELLIER, Mar-  
quis de Louvois, et de Courbanvaux.  
Sept. 1683. + July 16, 1691.

ÉDOUARD COLBERT, Marquis de Villa-  
cerf. July 28, 1691-1699.

JULES HARDOUIN MANSART. Jan. 1699.  
+ May 11, 1708.

*Note.*—After the death of J. H. Mansart  
the post of "Surintendant" was abolished,  
and the work divided between a "Directeur  
des Bâtimens," to all intents and purposes  
a Minister of Fine Arts (D'Antin), and an  
"Intendant des Bâtimens," or principal  
architect (De Cotte).

## *Directeurs des Bâtimens*

CHARLES ANTOINE DE PARDAILLAN  
DE GONDRIN, Marquis and afterwards  
Duc d'Antin. 1708-Nov. 2, 1736.

## *Directeurs de l'Académie*

I. First Directorate of CHARLES ERRARD.  
1666—1670.

II. NOËL COYPEL. 1673—1675.

III. Second Directorate of CHARLES  
ERRARD. 1675-1684. + May 25,  
1689, at Rome.

IV. LA TEULIÈRE. 1684-1699. +  
Aug. 16, 1702, at Rome.

V. RENÉ ANTOINE HOUASSE. 1699-  
1704. + May 27, 1710.

VI. CHARLES FRANÇOIS POERSON,  
1704-1724. + Sept. 2, 1725, at  
Rome.



## LOUIS XV. SEPT. 1, 1715—MAY 10, 1774

*Directeurs des Bâtimens*

PHILIBERT ORRY, Comte de Vignory.  
1736—Dec. 1745. + Nov. 9, 1747.

CHARLES FRANÇOIS PAUL LENORMANT  
DE TOURNEHEM. 1745-1754.

ABEL FRANÇOIS POISSON, Marquis de  
Vandières (1746), de Marigny (1755),  
de Ménars (1764). Oct. 1754—1777.  
+ May 10, 1781.

L'ABBÉ JOSEPH-MARIE TERRAY. 1773-  
1774.

*Directeurs de l'Académie*

VII. NICHOLAS WLEUGHELS. 1724-  
Dec. 11, 1737. + at Rome.

VIII. PIERRE DE LESTACHE, sculptor.  
1737-1738.

IX. JEAN FRANÇOIS DE TROY. 1738-  
1751. + Jan. 2, 1752, at Rome.

X. CHARLES NATOIRE. Sept. 1751—  
1775. + Aug. 29, 1777, at Castel-  
Gandolfo.

## LOUIS XVI. MAY 10, 1774—JAN. 2, 1793

*Directeurs des Bâtimens*

CHARLES CLAUDE FLAHAUT DE LA  
BILLARDERIE, Comte de Angivilliers.  
Sept. 3, 1774—1790. + 1810, in  
Germany.

M. DE LA PORTE, Intendant de la List  
Civile.

*Directeurs de l'Académie*

XI. NOEL HALLÉ. 1775.

XII. JOSEPH MARIE VIEN. 1775-1787.

XIII. LOUIS JEAN FRANÇOIS LA-  
GRENÉE. 1781-1787.

XIV. FRANÇOIS GUILLAUME MÉNA-  
GEOT. 1787-1793.







FRONTISPIECE TO PERRAULT'S "VITRUVIUS," ED. 1685, SHOWING THE ARC DE TRIOMPHE DU TRÔNE, THE LOUVRE, AND THE OBSERVATOIRE





# A History of French Architecture

## 1661—1774

### CHAPTER I

#### LOUIS XIV, COLBERT, AND THE ACADEMIES

THE death of Mazarin marks the end of a long and varied chapter in the history of the art of France and the rise of a new era which will close in a far more definite manner before the French Revolution. In previous volumes I have endeavoured to show how French architecture, without losing touch of the great building tradition of France, moved steadily forward from the experiments in the Italian manner introduced by François I, to an assured and wholly national architecture which culminated in the beautiful art of François Mansart. The master builders in the sixteenth century gave way reluctantly to the trained architect, such as De L'Orme and Bullant, Du Perac and the younger Du Cerceau. To Solomon de Brosse succeeded the generation of Le Mercier, Le Muet and François Mansart, and Louis Le Vau, ponderous but competent, carried on the tradition down to the date of the foundation of the French Academy of Architecture. During the political chaos of the last thirty years of the sixteenth century the progress of the arts in France had been suspended, but though there was a serious set back, it was only temporary, and the advance was resumed under Henri IV. At no point did this



movement become a revolution such as the change introduced into English architecture by Inigo Jones after his visit to Italy. Throughout the whole period from 1496 down to the end of the reign of Louis XV (1774) the course of French architecture ran in a steady consecutive current, each phase growing out of its predecessor by gradual changes, till in the last quarter of the eighteenth century it lost itself in the quicksands of revivalism.

In the period before 1661, before, that is, the dogmatic methods of the age of Louis XIV, there were wide divergences of manner varying with the locality, the materials, the individual temperament of the designer. But in spite of innumerable checks and variations, the art of France gradually settled down into definite lines: the Italian idiom was assimilated—what had been an exotic and the fashion of the Court became in the first half of the seventeenth century a genuine expression of the social and religious life of the French people. No one could mistake it for Italian neo-classic of the sixteenth century. It was not a direct appropriation, such, for example, as the English versions of Palladio in the eighteenth century. It was free, spontaneous, and wholly French. The encouragement given to the arts by François I was renewed by Henri IV, who made it a cardinal point of his policy to encourage country life in every part of his kingdom, and it was to his sagacity that we owe some of the most charming country houses to be found anywhere in the world. His statesmanlike schemes were cut short by his untimely death, and only resumed, in a diffident and half-hearted manner, by Louis XIII. Richelieu, a great gentleman as well as a first-rate statesman, took but a moderate interest in the arts, and did not foresee the part they were to play in the prosperity of France under the skilful handling of Colbert. But he did not entirely neglect them. I have already described his work at Richelieu and the treasures he collected there, and throughout the first half of the seventeenth century it was still the fashion to build great houses far away in the country, whereas, after the death of Mazarin, when Louis XIV set the example of building on an enormous scale, nearly all the important houses of the reigns of Louis XIV and Louis XV were built in Paris itself or within a ring fence in the near neighbourhood. Bagnolet, Bellevue, Berny, Chaville, Choisy, Clagny, Conflans, Fresne, Issy, Maisons, Marly, Meudon, Montmorency, Saint Cloud, Saint Ouen, Sceaux, Saint Germain, are all within a few miles of Paris,<sup>1</sup> and either

<sup>1</sup> See "Nouvelle description des Environs de Paris," Piganiol de la Force; vol. ix of the "Desc. Historique de la ville de Paris."

do or did once possess magnificent houses built either for the King or his favourites, or for wealthy State officials. Louis XIII took little interest in building. He was passionately fond of hunting, and indeed the only house he built himself was the hunting box of Versailles. His widow, Anne of Austria, was more keenly alive to the value of architecture. In the Church of the Val de Grâce she made a serious effort to obtain a masterpiece in the three arts, but her capacity lay in intrigue rather than organization, and Mazarin, though a virtuoso of the first rank, was also extremely parsimonious, and grudged any public expenditure that could be put off or avoided altogether. Though he loved to surround himself with all that was choicest in art, the direct encouragement that he gave to the artists of France was practically nil, nor, with the exception of the establishment of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture, founded in 1648, did he do anything to bring them within the scope of the State organization. From this point of view Mazarin's chief merit is that he got together an extremely fine collection of books and works of art, and that the enormous sums of money which he accumulated and left to Louis XIV enabled the latter to embark on his, or rather Colbert's, systematic reorganization of the arts of France.<sup>1</sup>

Mazarin died on 8 March 1661. The King was then twenty-two years old, ignorant and uneducated, but full of vitality and intelligence, and quick to learn. It seems that in the deliberate seclusion to which he had been relegated by Mazarin and Anne of Austria he must have built up ideas and ambitions of his own, with the full intention of putting them into execution at the first opportunity. It is not easy to arrive at a fair estimate of the character and abilities of Louis XIV. Saint-Simon, who knew him well, has drawn an inimitable portrait of the King, which is, on the whole, unfavourable. His general estimate of Louis XIV amounts to this: that the King had good natural qualities and possessed sense and moderation, he was averse from cruelty and violence, and showed an almost pathetic anxiety to learn the facts with which he and his minister had to deal, but that he was ruined by his surroundings. His education had been neglected in a scandalous manner, with the result that when power and opportunity came to him his character proved unequal to the occasion. His immorality in the earlier period of his reign exceeded even the liberal limits allowed

<sup>1</sup> The amount left by Mazarin is estimated by M. Lavissee at 200,000,000 livres, money that ought to have been spent on ships and forts, but which Mazarin put into his own pocket.



himself by his grandfather. Madame Charlotte Elizabeth of Bavaria, an extremely caustic and outspoken person, gives a list of his mistresses, and writes: "il en a voulu à toutes les femmes,"<sup>1</sup> and that during the regime of Madame de Beauvais "tout lui étoit bon alors, paysannes, filles de jardinier, servantes, femmes de chambre, femmes de qualité pourvu qu'elles fissent semblant de l'aimer." These words are open to two interpretations: either that the King felt himself so isolated that he was grateful for affection, wherever he met it, or that he was entirely occupied with himself. Saint-Simon thought that the clue to his complex character was his egotism and inordinate vanity. The King was in the forefront of everything, Heaven-inspired, in his own opinion, scarcely the inferior of the Almighty, and the equal at any rate of any of the heathen gods. At Colbert's suggestion he pensioned a large number of literary and scientific men, and in the medal struck in 1672 to commemorate this event, he appears as Apollo Palatinus leaning on his lyre, with his right hand elegantly poised on his hip. Throughout the whole of his long reign he dealt with all affairs, great or small, in terms of himself. His wars, his buildings, his encouragement of the arts, his efforts, or rather the efforts of his minister, to develop and consolidate trade, all had as their final aim the glory of the King. Colbert<sup>2</sup> wrote to Errard at Rome in 1672, "Pouvez estre assuré que sa majesté, aimant autant les beaux arts qu'il fait, les cultivera encore avec d'autant plus de soin, qu'ils pourront servir à éterniser ses grandes et glorieuses actions"—and this was to be the final cause and justification of all the arts and letters in France, at any rate in the earlier years of the reign. Saint-Simon says bluntly that it was only his fear of the devil that prevented Louis XIV from having himself worshipped as a God, and that it was this insufferable vanity which brought about the disasters of the latter part of his reign, and sowed the seed of others which, as Saint-Simon foresaw, were to overwhelm his country after his death. So far Louis XIV compares unfavourably with his father, a man of melancholy and rather morbid temperament, but a gentleman of the most sensitive honour, and still more so with his grandfather, Henri IV. Saint-Simon quotes a saying of his time: "Henri IV avec son peuple sur le Pont-Neuf, Louis XIII avec les gens de qualité a la Place Royale, et Louis XIV avec les maltotiers<sup>3</sup> dans la Place des

<sup>1</sup> "Fragmens de lettres originales de Madame Charlotte Elizabeth de Bavière, veuve de Monsieur Frère unique de Louis XIV," Hambourg, 1788, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> "Corresp. des Directeurs de l'Académie de France à Rome," i, 36.

<sup>3</sup> Tax Collectors.

Victoires," and there is a grim commentary on this in a remark of Vauban that the country people lived on bread made of barley and oats, husks and all, and only had meat three times in the year, "dans un espace restreint 511 maisons en ruine et inhabitables, 248 vides . . ." Ten years after the death of Louis XIV Saint-Simon speaks of France as "un vaste hôpital de mourants et desespérés."

Yet there seems little doubt that Saint-Simon was too sweeping. He was careless as to exact facts, and could never resist an epigram. His judgement, naturally hard and severe, was embittered by the King's neglect of the aristocracy, and it seemed to him an intolerable insult that the King should entrust his policy to new men such as Colbert and Louvois and be guided in matters of taste by a low-born artist such as Hardouin Mansart, nor could he ever forgive him the disastrous influence of Mme. de Maintenon. Looking back on his reign he was convinced that, though by no means lacking in capacity, the King's mind was second-rate, and that whether he was deep in his amours or wrestling with his devotions, there was no balance or stability in his character. The failure of the King's policy was absolute and patent, and it was impossible for Saint-Simon to forget that under the influence of Madame de Maintenon and the Jesuits he rushed from complete licence to an almost morbid and extremely irritating pietism. That he failed in many ways duly noted by Saint-Simon is undeniable. Yet Saint-Simon himself admits that he had good natural qualities, warped and demoralized by the flattery of those around him. Mme. de Bavière says: "Quoiqu'il aimât la flatterie, il en rioit, et s'en moquoit souvent lui-même . . . de son naturel il étoit confiant et tendre"<sup>1</sup> and she goes so far as to say: "S'il n'avoit pas eu le malheur de tomber entre les mains de Madame de Montespan, et de Madame de Maintenon qui étoit pire<sup>2</sup> que la première, il auroit été le modèle des Rois du monde." He was a perfect master of manner, from the lordly and Olympian to the frankly affable. He was never at fault, never at a loss how to handle a delicate situation. Louis XIV must have inherited the vitality and splendid self-confidence of his grandfather. He could be extremely generous on occasion, and sometimes with a nice consideration for the feelings of those whom he helped; with no liking for danger, he was not without courage, either physical or moral. Saint-Simon, though in one place he says "l'esprit du roi étoit au-dessous du médiocre," describes him elsewhere as "un prince qui n'étoit pas dépourvu d'esprit." Altogether he appears to have been a more considerable man than one

<sup>1</sup> "Fragmens de lettres," p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151, "ce vieux modèle."



could gather from Saint-Simon's memoirs. He attempted far too much himself, yet he—or rather Colbert—laid the foundations of that unrivalled supremacy in the arts, and the trades connected with the arts, which France enjoyed in the latter part of the seventeenth century and the whole of the eighteenth, and which, in fact, she has never wholly lost in the modern civilized world. There is this, too, to be said for the King, that if his ambition might seem to be set on his personal glory, he identified France with himself, and believed that in glorifying himself he was in fact glorifying his country. Perhaps he was a true Frenchman in his effort after an ideal, regardless of obstacles and reckless of cost. The glory that he aimed at may not have been wholly remote from the ideals which carried Napoleon's men from victory to victory, and that inspired the soldiers of France in the late war.

It has been necessary to dwell on the personal characteristics of Louis XIV because he identified himself in such an intimate manner with the art of his time, and because, through Colbert's elaborate organization, all the best artistic ability of the country was mobilized in the King's service and was under his direct, almost personal, control. After 1664 no French artist would have dared to treat a royal commission with the casual independence shown by François Mansart in preparing his designs for the Louvre. François Mansart was the last representative of that old school, unorganized and independent, in which every man designed according to his own ideas and not to an iron standard of design, a school in which we find at the same time manners so different as those of Le Mercier, Le Muet, François Mansart and Le Vau. A few years later Colbert's disciplined architects will produce designs so much alike that all trace of individual manner will be lost, and it will be difficult on internal evidence only to assign any specific building to any specific architect.

The real reign of Louis XIV begins in 1661, immediately after the death of Mazarin, and its most brilliant period extended from that year down to 1685, the year of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The greater part of Versailles, except the Chapel and the orangery, was completed by 1682.<sup>1</sup> Colbert died in 1685, and with him ended the regime of Le Brun<sup>2</sup> who for the last twenty years had been practically

<sup>1</sup> In the years 1664-85, 42,758,784 francs were spent on Versailles. Between 1685 and 1695, 6,183,645 ("Comptes").

<sup>2</sup> Le Brun died in 1690. In 1664 he was *premier peintre*, Chevalier of S. Michael, Chancellor for life of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture, and Director of the Gobelins. Almost the first act of Louvois on succeeding to Colbert's place was to replace Le Brun by Mignard, his enemy and rival.

dictator of the arts of France. The best work of the reign of Louis XIV had been executed within this twenty-five years. After that period the fortunes of France steadily declined. The King embroiled his country with the rest of Europe, and the later years of his reign were marked by ever-increasing embarrassment and financial straits. In the whole course of French art Colbert's administration is the period of the most vital importance, and his systematic reorganization of the arts is an episode almost unique in history.

An Academy of Painting and Sculpture had been founded in 1648 for political as well as artistic reasons, and to settle once for all the differences between the free artists and the "Corps de la Maîtrise," or master painters and sculptors, who wished to insist on a close trades-union in which all artists were to be compulsorily enrolled and registered, and outside of which no artists were to be allowed to ply their art at all. The guilds had become mere trades-unions in the most aggravated form. To such bodies the establishment of the new Academy was naturally a mortal offence, and the jealousy of the Maîtrise was inevitable and persistent. The Academy did its best to conciliate the Maîtrise by granting special privileges to the "Maîtres jurés," and in 1651 gave them privileges and a share in the Academy almost tantamount to those of the Academicians themselves.<sup>1</sup> The Maîtrise, however, showed the usual disregard of any interest but its own, characteristic of the guilds, thwarted the Academy in every way, went back on its word, and did all in its power by its intrigues to extinguish the Academy. The King, or rather Mazarin, had to interfere in 1654, and again in 1658, when a set of rooms under the great Gallery<sup>2</sup> of the Louvre was granted for the use of the Academy. The direct opposition of the Maîtrise had by this time lost its edge. Its members had probably convinced themselves that the Academy had come to stay, but from time to time they returned to the charge, and M. Aucoc<sup>3</sup> says that as late as 1777 they were still claiming their pretended monopoly. After ten years of struggle the Academy was more or less firmly established. Le Brun was its first Rector and among the twelve Ancients or Professors were: Charles Errard (1606-1689), Sebastian Bourdon (1616-1671), Jacques Sarrasin,

<sup>1</sup> "Procès-Verbaux de l'Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture," Paris, 1875, vol. i, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> In 1661 the Academy was given rooms at the end of the gallery of the Palais Royale, as the rooms in the Louvre were wanted for the Royal Printing establishment ("Procès-Verbaux," etc., i, 185).

<sup>3</sup> "L'Institut de France et les Anciennes Académies," Paris, 1889.



the Sculptor (1594-1660), Corneille, Painter (1603-1664), Eustache de Le Sueur (1617-1655), Gerard Van Obstal, Sculptor (1595-1668) and Simon Guillaing (1581-1658). Ten other academicians were appointed, none of them of conspicuous merit. Having weathered the hostility of the Maîtrise, the Academy very nearly came to pieces through its own internal troubles. Abraham Bosse, the engraver, an able but irritable person, and an honorary Academician, complained of his treatment by the Academy in a quarrel of his with a certain Le Bicheur, also an Academician. The dry chronicles of the Academy for once in a way cheer up. Certain members having pointed out "l'incivilité de son procédé" the Sieur Bosse, "s'est emporté a des parolle offensante, et des démantz sur diverses vérités quy estoit raportées, même avec des exécution scandaleuse. . . . S'est retiré incivilement et avecq menasse laissant la Compagnie en combustion à son sujet tellement que elle c'est séparé sen rien de desliberer."<sup>1</sup> The "combustion" was so hot that it appears to have affected the Secretary's spelling. Bosse was expelled and Le Bicheur left in possession as teacher of Perspective. Meanwhile, the Academy had failed to discharge its educational duties. It had been established not only to promote the arts of painting and sculpture, but also to instruct and train students. The Academicians were bound to pose the model and to instruct "la jeunesse," and for this "la jeunesse" had to pay fees unless they were the sons of Academicians, or of Maîtres jurés.<sup>2</sup> The Academicians had so neglected this duty that in January, 1659, complaint was made to the Academy that the members by this negligence "pourront l'anéantir, si on n'y apportait le remède necessaire" ("Procès," i, 149). Things were allowed to drift, but in 1662 the students took matters into their own hands, refused to pay their fees, seceded from the Academy school and started one of their own, and addressed to the Chancellor the "très humbles suplications" of the poor students in painting and sculpture in the town of Paris. The students, who described themselves as eighteen or twenty young men coming from different provinces of the Realm, give the following reasons for their having left the Academy school:

1. That the school instead of being in the centre of the town had been established in the Rue de Richelieu with the result of danger and even loss of life among students coming from the

<sup>1</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," i, 174.

<sup>2</sup> See "Procès-Verbaux," i, 7-10. The privilege was withdrawn from the Maîtres jurés in 1656, because the latter declined to pay their share of the expenses of the Academy (*ibid.*, p. 120).

Faubourgs S. Antoine, S. Jacques, S. Germain, S. Victor, and the Marais.

2. That for several years they had never seen the Academy professors in the school, and that the latter contented themselves with sending their children who wanted teaching themselves.
3. That the times were inconvenient to the students.
4. That the instruction which ought to be gratuitous was not so.
5. That "dans la première vigueur de ceste Académie," Practical Geometry, Perspective, the orders of Architecture, Anatomy, and other details of the arts had been taught, but in the last eight or ten years only Perspective had been taught, and that in an unintelligible manner.
6. That the Academicians had quarrelled among themselves.

According to the students the Academy had entirely failed of its trust and they therefore had established a school of their own where they posed the model themselves and instructed each other.<sup>1</sup> The plaint is very well drafted, and one would expect it to have fallen like a thunderbolt in the midst of the astonished Academicians. The latter, however, were equal to the occasion; they at once resolved that no student concerned in this matter should be admitted to their school, unless they submitted themselves and stated who had inspired this enterprise. The Academicians evidently suspected, and probably with reason, that the *Maitres jurés* were at the bottom of it. Within six weeks of their plaint the students submitted, and the Academy re-admitted them to their school with the exception of three notorious offenders. But the action of the students was not without effect; the Academy granted free and part-free instruction to the more meritorious students, and about this time Colbert appears on the scene, and under his iron hand the Academy saw the wisdom of putting its house in order. Various regulations were made. Members who let out Academy secrets were suspended for six months on a first offence, and for ever on a second, and the Academy took legal proceedings against students, among them young Coysevox the sculptor, who had insulted the Professor in the drawing school.

In 1663 Le Brun obtained a Royal decree that no painter or sculptor was entitled to call himself painter or sculptor to the King unless he was a member of the Academy. In reward for this service

<sup>1</sup> This I believe to be the earliest example of the famous French system of *Ateliers*. The plaint of the students is given in full in vol. i, pp. 197-202 of the "*Procès-Verbaux*."



Le Brun was made Chancellor of the Academy for life, and with this very important recognition the status of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture was now fairly established.<sup>1</sup>

In 1664 Colbert addressed them in person and announced that he would be present at the judging for the prizes. New statutes and regulations were enacted,<sup>2</sup> a scale of fees to be paid by the State for the support of the Academy received the Royal assent,<sup>3</sup> and it was announced that the King had resolved in future to avail himself of the Academy for the decoration of the Royal Houses, and that a beginning was to be made with the Grand Gallery of the Louvre. The *Maîtres jurés* must have gnashed their teeth, for their defeat by the Academy was now beyond question. By the Statutes of 1664, Article 1 of the new statutes enacted that no school of painting and sculpture other than that of the Royal Academy might be established in the town of Paris, except by order and consent of the Academy, and that any such that existed were to be abolished. It was a strong, even arbitrary, measure, but the guilds had brought it on themselves.

For the next fifty years or so the Academy of Painting and Sculpture did admirable work, but in the first half of the eighteenth century it made the disastrous mistake of abdicating its position. It placed itself at the feet of wealthy amateurs, such as Comte de Caylus, elected its *honoraires amateurs* on the strength of their social position, and instead of concentrating its attention on art, devoted itself to the hopeless pursuit of fashion. In its latter days the Academy became careless of its duties, selfish, and intolerant. Many of its own members disapproved of it, and the party of reform led by David the painter brought about the abolition of the old Academy by decree of the Convention in 1793. Yet within two years of its extinction it was recognized that an Academy of some sort, a central body representative of the arts, was absolutely necessary, and in 1795 the same Convention decreed

<sup>1</sup> In this year (1663) the Academy consisted of four Rectors, Le Brun, Errard, Bourdon, and Poerson, thirteen Professors, eleven Counsellors, and fifty-nine Academicians including two women, of which nineteen were elected in 1663, eighty-seven in all ("Procès-Verbaux," i, 229-30).

<sup>2</sup> See "Procès-Verbaux," i, 250-258. Article V enacted that deliberations were to be conducted "avec ordre de bonne foy, en conscience sans brigue, caballe n'y passions, mais avec discretion et sans s'interrompre l'un l'autre."

<sup>3</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," i, 248-9. The amounts were as follows. For each of the four Rectors 300 livres, for each of the twelve Professors 100 livres, for the masters of Geometry, Perspective, and Anatomy 200 livres each, the cost of the model, oil, and charcoal for heating, 500 livres, for prizes for the students 400 livres, for petty cash expenses 100 livres; total 4,000 livres.

the creation of the Institute, followed by the reorganization of the four old Academies in 1803: "L'abîme creusé en 1793 entre le present et le passé à été rapidment comblé."<sup>1</sup> What was necessary after the French Revolution is even more necessary now, when art is so cosmopolitan that it tends to lose its national character, and changes of fashion which arrived after twenty years of experiment in the eighteenth century, can now be advertised into prominence in six months. It is essential that there should be some steadying authority, some guardian of tradition, some rallying point for all serious artists. Academies are very much open to attack, and not infrequently deserve it, but under modern conditions I believe that, rightly handled, they have an indispensable part to play in the development of the arts.

<sup>1</sup> M. de Tocqueville, quoted by M. Aucoc, "l'Institut de France et les anciennes Académies."



## CHAPTER II

### THE ACADEMY OF ARCHITECTURE

THE Académie Française had been established in 1635, the Academy of Painting and Sculpture in 1648, the Academy of Inscriptions and Medals<sup>1</sup> in 1663, and the Academy of Science in 1666. Meanwhile there was no Academy of Architecture. The first step in this direction was taken by Colbert in 1663, when he established a Committee of Advice. Perrault's account is that in 1662 Colbert, knowing that he was to be appointed "surintendant des batiments" in succession to M. Ratabon, determined to extend and develop the work of that office. He contemplated not only the completion of the Louvre, but also "beaucoup de monumens à la gloire du roi, comme des arcs de triomphe, des obelisques, des pyramides, des mausolées, car il n'y a rien de grand ni de magnifique qu'il ne se proposât d'exécuter,"<sup>2</sup> and with this object in view he established "une espèce de petit Conseil qu'il peut consulter sur toutes les choses qui regardent les bâtimens, et ou il peut entrer de l'esprit et de l'érudition." This Council was to meet twice a week on Tuesday and Friday, with Charles Perrault as Secretary. Curiously enough, though its principal concern was with building, the Council did not include any architect, and was composed wholly of literary men, Chapelain, the Abbé de Bourseis, and the Abbé de Cassagnes, all of them, including Perrault, selected for their literary work. They not unnaturally ignored the *arcs de triomphe*, the obelisks and the pyramids, and devoted themselves to the composition of inscriptions for the numerous medals struck in honour of the King, and to the editing of the various works written for his glorification,<sup>3</sup> and published by the Royal Press in the Louvre.

<sup>1</sup> In 1716 this became the "Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres," Aucoc, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> "Mémoires de ma vie," par Charles Perrault, ed. Paul Bonnefon, pp. 34-35.

<sup>3</sup> Perrault says the MSS. of these works filled two very large portfolios.

Thus, so far as architecture was concerned, this "petit Conseil" missed fire, but the ingenious Perrault found his opportunity in the new buildings of the Louvre. Bernini had been skilfully manœuvred out of France, and Perrault, having secured the design for his brother Claude, was at much pains to find some decent colouring for a gross family job. He therefore proposed to Colbert (1665-6) the formation of a "Conseil des Bâtiments, composé de M. Le Vau, premier architecte, qui avoit pres de trente années d'experience, de M. Le Brun qui possédoit tous les beaux arts et qui n'ignoroit pas les principes de l'architecture, et de mon frère, auteur du dessein."<sup>1</sup> According to Perrault, who was secretary, the whole time of this Council was taken up by disputes in which Claude Perrault demonstrated to Le Vau and Le Brun their ignorance of architecture, and their error in not recognizing the merits of his design.

Colbert was evidently dissatisfied with this "Conseil des Bâtiments," for in 1671 an Academy of Architecture was founded, and all its members were practising architects. M. Lemonnier<sup>2</sup> suggests that its establishment was mainly due to François Blondel, who was its first director and probably drafted the scheme of its organization. Blondel says its principal object was the instruction of artists, and for this purpose its members had been chosen from those most capable in the art. Their duties were to assemble once a week for discussion and research, to give public instruction twice a week on "les règles les plus justes et les plus correctes de l'architecture," and to award prizes to the students, the successful students being sent to the French Academy in Rome at the King's expense.<sup>3</sup> The course of instruction was to include, in addition to design, "les autres sciences qui sont absolument nécessaires aux architectes," viz.: geometry, arithmetic, mechanics, hydraulics, gnomonics, military architecture, perspective, stereotomy, and various branches of mathematics. The first meeting was held on December 3, 1671, in the presence of Colbert and other distinguished personages, the members present were Liberal Bruand, Daniel Gittard, Antoine le Paultre, François Le Vau, Pierre Mignard, François D'Orbay, François Blondel as director, and André Félibien as secretary. Blondel delivered an inaugural address on the excellence of architecture, and wound up

<sup>1</sup> Only two years before this date Le Vau had been carrying out his designs for the completion of the Louvre, when he was stopped by Colbert.

<sup>2</sup> "Procès-Verbaux de l'Académie Royale d'Architecture," vol. i, pp. viii-ix, edited by Henry Lemonnier, Paris, 1911, with admirable introductions to which I am greatly indebted in the account I have given of the Academy of Architecture.

<sup>3</sup> François Blondel, "Cours d'Architecture," Preface.



his peroration by saying that when in the Bible God threatened to punish his people for their impiety, he added "pour comble de malheurs," that he would even deprive them of their architects. The apologists of architecture, from Vitruvius onwards, have never shown any conspicuous sense of humour. The first subject discussed by the new Academy was "le Bon Goust." On this the Academicians came to two conclusions; first, that everything in good taste must please, but it does not follow from this that everything that pleases is in good taste; and secondly, that the touchstone of taste is "ce qui a toujours plu davantage aux personnes intelligentes," that is, persons whose merit is established by their works or writings, practically the Aristotelian standard: "ὥς ἂν ὁ φρόνιμος ὀρίσειεν." The next step was clearly to make a selection of "personnes intelligentes," and this the Academicians proceeded to do, placing Vitruvius as the chief authority among the ancients, and Palladio among the moderns. These might be followed without hesitation in general. After them, but with inferior authority, they placed Scamozzi and Vignola. Serlio is commended as a man from whom intelligent architects might gather several *belles idées*. Alberti was to be considered as an author rather than as "un ouvrier du bon goust." As for Viola and Cataneo, they merely repeated other writers. The classification is curious, and suggests that the members of the Academy had not studied the works of their architects at first hand or on the spot. Scamozzi was later than Vignola and much inferior to him, both in theory and practice. The probable explanation is that in 1672 Daviler had not published his "Cours d'architecture qui comprend les ordres de Vignole,"<sup>1</sup> and that the Academicians knew very little about him. They certainly did less than justice to Alberti, who was a bold and original designer, and no reference is made to the practice of the great architects of the Renaissance, Brunelleschi, Bramante, Sangallo, Peruzzi, and Michael Angelo. The preference for published treatises on architecture as authorities is characteristic of the whole Academic position as conceived in the time of Louis XIV, and more particularly as it presented itself to the despotic intellect of Colbert. What he wanted in his men was system, order, and subordination. The caprice of a more fanciful art made no appeal to him. When authority was once established—and this he left to his nominees of the Academy—any break with its doctrines appeared to him wrong, if not inconceivable. It was impossible to establish out of the practice of the great architects of the

<sup>1</sup> Published in 1691.

past an absolutely watertight scheme of authority, and it therefore became necessary to fall back on the published treatises on architecture. The result was the grandiose architecture of Louis XIV, consummate in technique, as far as it went, but less vital and less elastic than the masterful originality of François Mansart or the infinite fancy of Wren.

Yet the Academicians were no mere pedants. They were practical men who knew their business, and perfectly understood, as the literary man never has understood, what architecture sets out to do, what are its conditions and limitations, what are the mental processes inseparably connected with its practice. They dealt with their authorities faithfully with reference to modern architecture, and wherever possible checked their statements by actual measurements. In a discussion on modern bridges Blondel supplies an example of one at Cismon in Italy, between Trent and Bassano, with a span of sixteen fathoms, and another at Narva,<sup>1</sup> in Livonia, on the Gulf of Finland. Both Blondel and Mignard (the architect) check Palladio's statements by their own notes made in Rome, and criticize severely certain of his designs. In 1674, after a year's study, they finish Palladio and take up Claude Perrault's edition of Vitruvius. In 1676 they transferred their attention to Scamozzi, but very soon gave him up and entered on a systematic course of De l'Orme, which did not terminate till 1678. Throughout the discussions the standpoint is critical and practical. All the members were practising architects, and whatever the writers might say, they knew when the actual difficulties of design began. The familiar question of the column and pilaster appeared early on the scene. Should the pilaster be finished with the same diminution and entasis as the column, or should it run straight up throughout? If diminished, owing to the rectangular plan of the pilaster, the diminution becomes exaggerated on the angle, and if it is not diminished, the pilaster must either follow the upper or lower diameter of the column. If it follows the upper, the pilaster is unduly attenuated, and if it follows the lower, the pilaster comes outside the soffit of the architrave. "Cette grande question" was keenly debated by the Academicians in 1672; for six months they were unable to arrive at any result. After ten meetings they resolved to look up the point in Vitruvius, but, being poor Latinists, were reduced to Martin's translation. This they found useless, owing to "le peu de rapport qu'il y a de cette traduction au sens de l'auteur," and accordingly they decided to wait till M. Perrault had completed his

<sup>1</sup> Both bridges are described by Blondel in his "Cours d'Architecture," 2nd ed., ii, 631-33 as resembling wooden bridges designed by Palladio.



translation of Vitruvius. The question was not settled till 1676, when the Academy decided that the solution was to split the difference in the projection of the architrave between columns and pilasters without any break, so that the architrave would project a little beyond the line of the upper diameter of the column and come a little within the line of the pilaster.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout their discussions the point of view of practice was always present to their minds. They dealt with the composition of mortar, the use of cramps for masonry, the proper seasoning of stone, seldom attended to in their time, as the Academy points out, because everyone was in such a hurry to build. In a conference in July 1673, when Colbert was present, they insisted that Italian designs were quite unsuitable for France, and that in many Italian plans the chimneys were badly placed, the rooms ill-lit, and the positions of the beds not considered at all. The Academy was determined to make it clear that the experiment of Bernini was not to be repeated, and here they had the Minister with them, for Colbert was fully resolved that France was to be for the French. In regard to masonry, and with an eye to the immense building operations then in progress, the Academy advised that large stones should be "polished" (worked smooth) on their upper and under surfaces and laid dry, or on thin sheets of lead kept back 4 or 5 in. from the face, because it was found that mortar did not adhere equally to the beds of stones beyond a certain size, with the result of uneven bearings. The Academy was frequently consulted on practical points of design. In 1678 Charles Perrault, as controller of buildings under Colbert, asked for advice on a difficult detail at Versailles. In the same year Blondel submitted his design for the iron gates of the Porte S. Denis, 24 ft. wide by 18 ft. high, and Dorbay consulted them as to the placing of the tomb of Mazarin. The Pères

<sup>1</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," i, 112-113. This compromise was based on examples in the Pantheon and the temple of Antoninus and Faustina. The Academy, rightly in my opinion, was anxious to avoid the constant succession of breaks in entablatures which had disfigured so many French designs of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century—for example, de Brosse's design of the Luxembourg. In a conference held in 1681, on the question of orders above orders to each storey as against the colossal order running through several storeys, the Academy decided "qu'il est beaucoup mieux de mettre autant de colonnes ou pilasters qu'il y a d'étages, et que l'on ne doit jamais se servir de l'autre pratique," except in cases where pilasters form part of "une ordonnance de colonnes" of some great portico, and in this case on condition that on no account whatever was the entablature to be broken ("Procès-Verbaux," i, 320-21). Jules Hardouin Mansart, with characteristic indifference to any system, avoided the colossal order, but on the other hand broke the line of his entablatures.

Feuillans asked them for a design for the entrance to their convent in the Rue S. Honoré, and the work was entrusted to Bruand, whose design was approved by the Academy two months later. In 1677 Gittard made complaint that his design for the Church of S. Jacques du Hautpas had been murdered by the contractor, so that his work was "au mespris et à la honte de l'architecture et du siècle." Le Pautre explained that a mason named Gerard, "s'est ingeré de les [his designs for S. Cloud] estropier et gaster," and Jules Hardouin Mansart, who had been admitted a member in 1675, made a similar complaint. Mansart also consulted the Academy as to the proper thickness of a dome 40 ft. in diameter, 69 ft. above floor, with walls 4 ft. 6 in. thick, and was advised to make the dome 12 in. thick at base and 8 in. thick in the upper part, as done by Gittard in the Church of S. Sulpice. Mansart seems to have found the Academy a very useful body, for in 1689 he submitted his design for the construction of the dome of the Invalides, and consulted them as to iron ties and bands in order to prevent the wood framing of the upper dome from slipping, and as we shall see later, the Academy was consulted by Louvois on the construction of the aqueduct of Maintenon, and was constantly occupied with the consideration of designs for bridges in various parts of France.

In June, 1678, a difference between Antoine Le Pautre and his brother Jean, the engraver, as to the repair of a house, was referred to the Academy, who decided against the engraver, and it was not considered beneath its dignity to deal with questions of light and air, rights of way, and matters which would nowadays be referred to arbitration. The members of the Academy were paid for their attendances at the rate of eleven livres apiece for each meeting,<sup>1</sup> and Colbert had no intention that the position of Academician should be a sinecure. Among their privileges the members alone had the right to the title of "architecte du Roi," carrying with it a salary of 500 livres per annum, and by the decree of March, 1676, all contractors were forbidden to assume that title under penalty of 1,000 livres d'amende.<sup>2</sup> The decree was aimed at the master masons, who had freely assumed the title of "architecte du Roi." Colbert was determined to protect his Academy, but he was also determined that they should amply justify their exist-

<sup>1</sup> See "Comptes des bâtiments du Roi," i, 648, 781, 787, 790, 1086. In 1672 the amount for six months was 1,815 livres; in 1679, 2,618; in 1676, 1,628 livres. In 1678 when the members were inspecting buildings and quarries, the total was 4,235 livres. Note by M. Lemonnier, "Procès-Verbaux," vol. i, p. xviii.

<sup>2</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," i, 109.



ence, and in 1678 he instructed them to inspect the ancient churches and buildings of Paris, with a view to reporting on the stones of which they were built, the qualities of the stone, and the quarries from which they came. The Academy spent July, August, and September in visiting the buildings and the quarries, and it appears that their instructions were extended, for in August they visited the quarries of S. Leu, Ecouen, of Trossi, Pontoise, S. Cloud, Meudon, Charenton, Vitry, S. Germain-en-Laye, Vernon, Gaillon,<sup>1</sup> Pont de Larche, and Rouen. From Rouen they came down the Seine, inspecting the quarries on the way. In September they were at Anet, where among other things they noted an architectural solecism in the Chapel of Diane de Valentino (Diane de Poitiers). The pilasters of the entrance had Attic bases, Corinthian Capitals, and a Composite entablature.<sup>2</sup> In September they visited the Château de Madrid and the quarries of S. Cloud, and the report was drafted in the following November.

The first Conference of the Academy had been devoted to a discussion of "le bon goust," but the members were evidently dissatisfied with the result, for just ten years later, in 1681, they attacked the problem again. Claude Perrault, in the introduction to his translation of Vitruvius, had made the assertion: "La Beauté n'ayant guerre d'autre fondement que la fantaisie." This was altogether too much for Blondel, who had a curious aesthetic of his own. Perrault was by this date superseded and out of fashion, and it was probably on Blondel's suggestion that they endeavoured to settle whether there is in nature "quelque chose de réel et de positif," any actual counterpart to "le bon goust"—or whether what pleases us in architecture does so solely as the result of association. The company decided that though many details of architecture are arbitrary, and please us only because they occur in the works of men whom we respect, it is probable that there is in architecture a certain numerical arrangement and proportion which results in the harmony which we call beauty, and which is analogous to harmony in music.<sup>3</sup> Blondel devoted chapter xvi, book v, of his "Cours d'Architecture" to the thesis "que les Proportions sont la cause

<sup>1</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," i, 221-222, for a very interesting account of the state of Gaillon in 1678. It appears to have been in excellent condition, except for the failure of some of the stonework in the terrace balustrades.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 240. Félibien's description in the minutes is inaccurate. The pilasters do not belong to the entrance, but are the pilasters of the west façade carrying the main entablature. I attribute this building to Jean Bullant. See "Hist. of French Architecture, 1494-1661," Blomfield, i, 105-106.

<sup>3</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," i, 321-322.

de la beauté dans l'architecture, et que cette beauté n'a pas moins son fondement dans la nature, que celle des accords dans la musique." Ouvrard, "cy-devant Maître de Musique de la Sainte Chapelle," wrote a book which made a considerable sensation at the time, "Architecture Harmonique,<sup>1</sup> ou L'application de la doctrine des proportions de la musique à l'architecture." The Academy found that though we have no exact knowledge of what these arrangements and proportions are, they are none the less there—and made an attempt to combine the Platonic idea with Aristotle's man of knowledge, which amounted to nothing at all. In a conference held in 1682 the minutes state baldly and bluntly "la grace, proportion et beauté dépend du génie et du sçavoir de l'architecte."<sup>2</sup>

The Academicians give me the impression of being level-headed men of affairs, well acquainted with their art, but with a limited knowledge outside it, and consequently quite out of their depth when they attempted to discuss the theory of aesthetic, though indeed it was hardly to be expected that they should solve a problem which has baffled the best intelligence of the world. The question was raised again in 1687, when the discussion was so vague and discursive that it was decided not to enter it in the minutes.

The real interest of the Academy lay with practical questions of building and design. François Blondel, its guiding spirit, and intellectually by far the ablest man in the Academy, was less an artist than a highly cultivated man of science. La Hire, who succeeded him in 1686 as professor and director, was a distinguished mathematician, Bruand was a business man, and Mansart an astute and unscrupulous man of affairs who, in his inner heart, was profoundly indifferent to abstract questions of aesthetic. The members pursued their studies on the authorities with indomitable perseverance, but their researches seem to have had little effect on their practice. There is no trace of Vitruvius or of the Italian masters in the Chapel of Versailles, the dome of the Invalides or the colonnade of the Louvre, and as time went on, their conferences might almost have been a solemn farce played to save the face of the Academy quâ Academy, for French architects, towards the middle of the eighteenth century, indulged themselves in a licence of design and ornament that might have made Palladio turn in his grave. The really valuable work done by the Academy was its investigation of problems of construction. They were constantly consulted on definite

<sup>1</sup> See Blondel, "Cours d'Architecture," bk. v, chap. xi.

<sup>2</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," ii, 7. See also ii, 119, 1686.



points of building. In 1685 Louvois referred to them the design of the aqueduct of Maintenon, and, arbitrary as he was, actually yielded to their advice, though in the result, owing to its enormous cost, the enterprise had to be abandoned. Blondel describes a grille made of oak sleepers which he had used for the foundations of the bridge of Saintes,<sup>1</sup> and when the Jesuits of Caen consulted the Academy as to the foundations of their new Church of Notre D  me de la Gloriette, the Academicians advised a similar treatment<sup>2</sup> in a clay subsoil. The question of foundations in difficult ground appears again and again in their discussions. In 1683 Bruand and Gittard submitted various proposals for foundations and bridges,<sup>3</sup> and in 1685 Bullet produced a design for a bridge at la Fert   sous Jouarre, and an elaborate discussion was held on the rebuilding of the bridge over the Loire at Nantes. From 1685 onwards much attention was given to the design and construction of bridges. The scientific bent of French architecture was steadily developing, and under La Hire the tendency to reduce the whole art and practice of architecture to a scientific system became more marked and deliberate. The same practical logical instinct appears in their criticisms of designs. The use and purpose of buildings was the first thing to be considered, and if a design missed that purpose it was *ipso facto* a failure. There is a notable instance of this in the criticisms, one might even call it the onslaught, made in 1685 on Perrault's design for the Arc de Triomphe du Faubourg saint Antoine. The Academy<sup>4</sup> could find nothing that was right in this design. Possibly Blondel, who regarded himself as an expert in Triumphal arches, drafted the report, but no more damning criticism has ever been passed by architects on the work of a colleague of admitted reputation. It is not clear whether Claude Perrault was ever actually a member of the Academy. He is included in the list of members, published in the "Archives de l'Art Fran  ais" (vol. i), and he occasionally attended its meetings, but it is

<sup>1</sup> See "Cours d'Architecture," vol. ii, chap. xv, pp. 659-672 for description of the Bridges of Saintes.

<sup>2</sup> "Proc  s-Verbaux," ii, 22-23. The reference gives the date of this excellent example of Jesuit church architecture, 1683-84. The Academy were somewhat cold in their appreciation of the design, merely remarking: "Que ce dessein ne lui paro  t pas mauvais." The design was made by Le P  re Andr  , procureur of the Jesuit College at Caen, of whom a contemporary wrote that he possessed "un go  t exquis pour l'architecture," but was prevented from practice by violent headaches. In the year III of the Revolution it was declared by the Communal Council to be "un des plus beaux monuments de la cit  ." See "Caen son Histoire," par G. S. Trebutien, pp. 122-123.

<sup>3</sup> "Proc  s-Verbaux," ii, 38, 58.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 98, 101. See below on Claude Perrault.

probable that he did so as one of the officers of the royal buildings and not as an Academician, but his day was over in any case. Colbert, his patron and protector, had died in 1683. Louvois was his enemy, and the great French architects of the time could never make up their minds whether Perrault was a designer of genius or an impertinent amateur. Their instincts inclined to the latter view. On the other hand, they felt bound to admit some merit in the Colonnade of the Louvre.

Blondel died on 21st January, 1686, and the Academy of Architecture had now definitely settled down to its work. The only episodes of note in its history of this period were its transfer from the Hôtel Brion to the Louvre in 1692<sup>1</sup> and the suspension of its work by order of the King in 1694 owing to the financial difficulties due to the war of the League of Augsburg. The Academy rose to the occasion by petitioning the King to be allowed to continue their work gratuitously, which they were graciously permitted to do.<sup>2</sup>

In 1699 Mansart was appointed *Surintendant des Bâtiments*, and the final organization of the Academy was settled. Henceforward it was to consist of seven architects of the first class, a professor and a secretary; seven (altered to ten) of the second class, and a third class of the officers in charge of buildings who had the right to attend the meetings. The only other important change occurred in 1717 when the Academy was allowed the right of submitting three names to the King out of whom the King selected one as an Academician. Hitherto all the appointments had been made by the King or his Minister. In 1792 the Convention suppressed the School at Rome, and in 1793 did away with all Academies and literary societies "patentées ou dotées par la nation." In 1795 the Academy of Architecture was re-established as the third, and afterwards the fourth, class of the Institute.

Colbert's foundation had so far answered its purpose that it introduced order and system into the irregular practice of earlier French architecture and that it gradually established that tradition of thorough training and sound and scientific building which has distinguished French architecture for the last two centuries. In 1686 the Academy laid it down that it adhered to "les mesmes sentiments que l'on a toujours eus qu'il y à trois choses nécessaires à observer dans les bâtiments, qui est la solidité, la commodité et la beauté, et que la perfection de ces trois parties depend de la grandeur du génie de l'archi-

<sup>1</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," ii, 230. The Hôtel Brion was attached to the Palais Royal. The Academy of Painting and Sculpture was moved at the same time.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 280-281.



tecte."<sup>1</sup> They added further that there was no certain rule which would make the workman infallible.

Whether fully realized or not, it seems that two dangers to architecture were felt by the Academy. The first was its old enemy the master-builder, the man who by reason of belonging to a trade guild claimed a monopoly of building knowledge, and from that proceeded to argue that he was competent to undertake the design as well as the construction of buildings. And the second danger was the amateur, who claims that by reason of his enthusiasm for the arts, his opinion on their merits and conduct is as authoritative as that of men who have devoted their lives to their study and mastery. It was the work of the Academy to reduce these claims to their just proportions, and the result was seen in the fine technique of French architects in the eighteenth century.

It is useless to look for profound theories of aesthetic in the conferences of the Academy, but there is a great deal of sound common sense, and their instinct was for dignity and proportion, order and reasonableness. In the frontispiece to the five orders by Abraham Bosse, Reason or Architecture is seated on a lion placed on a lofty pedestal in a bay of the Ionic order: below, flanking the steps, a figure of Theory stands on the right and of Practice on the left. On the pedestal of the central figure is the inscription "La raison sur tout," and on the riser of the bottom step "le commode"; above, two niches in the background are "Le solide" and "L'agréable." The allegory sums up the position of the Academy, however crudely, and though French architects of the eighteenth century turned their backs on Vitruvius and Palladio, the best among them seldom lost sight of these essential qualities. Though the younger Blondel complained bitterly of licence in ornament and detail, the Academy did in fact do much to preserve the tradition of solid and dignified building. Where it failed was in excessive specialization. Architects were so much occupied with the intricate technique of their designs, that the decoration of their buildings fell out of their control, and became the special province of a class of men who dealt solely with surface ornament and did so from the point of view of the draughtsman rather than of the craftsman in materials. Du Cerceau<sup>2</sup> as

<sup>1</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," ii, 119.

<sup>2</sup> The Academy recorded its deliberate disapproval of Du Cerceau. In May 1672 they considered his works and resolved that "à ceux qui ne font que commencer dans l'architecture, ilz sont plus dangereux qu'utiles, à cause des licences qu'il s'est données dans ses inventions" ("Procès-Verbaux," i, 12).

an ornamentalist did untold injury to the art of France in founding a tradition of ornament in the air, designed without reference to the conditions under which it was to be carried out. Had the Academy of Architecture kept in touch with the Academy of Painting or Sculpture this might have been avoided, but I can find no reference to that Academy; indeed the two Academies appear to have kept severely apart. The conception of architecture as a science that could be taught exactly and in the abstract, rather than as an art, introduced by Blondel and La Hire, had an unfortunate tendency to cramp the imagination of designers. It led to a violent reaction into extreme licence in the middle of the eighteenth century which in its time brought about a pedantic revival of the antique, so oppressive that in its turn it resulted in that disastrous corollary of the Romantic movement, the Gothic revival.

The educational work of the Academy of Architecture was of the highest importance. An academy is not a university, and in order that it may exert its influence in the most effective manner, it is essential that it should be backed by a solid body of convinced opinion, and that it should teach a definite manner and definite principles of design. Its object is to train artists, not to provide them with short cuts to success, and for this purpose the method of training should be an agreed method, and not one interchangeable at will with other possibly antagonistic methods. In this regard the old French Academy had a great advantage over its modern successors. Under Louis XIV authority was solidly entrenched, and though curious and enquiring spirits such as Claude Perrault might break away, as a rule there was little disposition to question the accepted principles of design. In the second place the Academy was, in fact, a part of the State hierarchy, financed by the King and dependent on the Royal authority for its very existence—a formidable barrier of official routine was thus established which effectually prevented any serious innovation in architecture, and whatever might be done in the successive fashions of ornament, architects showed no disposition to deviate from the accepted academical and official standpoint. The happy freedom and adventure of the days of Henri IV and Louis XIII were gone for ever. Yet for one hundred years the French Academy maintained the great tradition of French classical design, and the value of its work is shown by what happened after its temporary suppression during the French Revolution. Had France adhered to the principles of 1687 we should have been spared the insipidities of the Empire and the sentimentalities of Viollet-le-Duc.



Colbert's work was a very great one and wisdom was justified of her children. In the dedication of his "Cours d'Architecture" to Louis XIV in 1675,<sup>1</sup> François Blondel prophesied "Les étrangers viendront chez nous à l'avenir pour s'instruire des principes d'architecture, aussi bien que pour se perfectionner dans l'étude des autres vertus." One may pass the other virtues, but the first half of this prediction has been fulfilled to the letter.

<sup>1</sup> "Cours d'Architecture," 2nd ed., 1698. Epistre.

## CHAPTER III

### THE FRENCH ACADEMY AT ROME

THE establishment of a French Academy in Rome was, in fact, the systematic organization of a practice that had been followed in a haphazard fashion since the days of Henri IV. The attempt, made in the first instance by François I, to establish a colony of artists at the Hôtel de Nêsle came to a premature end, and until Henri IV took the matter up there was no rallying point for artists or any centre of training in the arts. That King had definitely intended to provide for this in building the gallery of the Louvre. The letters patent<sup>1</sup> of 1608 begin: "Comme entre les infinis biens qui sont causés par la paix, Celui qui provient de la culture des arts n'est par de moindres, ses rendans grandement florissans par icelle, et dont le publique reçoit un tres grande commodité, nous avons eu aussi cet égard dans la construction de notre galerie du Louvre, d'en disposer le bâtiment en telle forme que nous pouissions commodément loger quantité des meilleurs ouvriers et plus suffisans maîtres qui pourroient se recouvrer tant de peinture, sculpture, orfèvrerie, horlogerie, insculpture en pierreries qu'autres de plusiers et excellens arts . . . et aussi pour faire comme une pépinière d'ouvriers"—and further to protect artists from the tyranny of the *Maîtrise*. The statesmanlike idea of a "nursery of craftsmen" was not realized, and there was nothing for it but to send the most promising of the younger men to learn their business in Italy. Marie de Medicis continued and developed this practice, but no attempt was made, either by Richelieu or Mazarin, to embody it in the State machine, or to treat it as anything more than a piece of patronage to be used in the interest of the arts, or for their own private purposes. Richelieu had his great country house to fill, and Mazarin was an insatiable collector, who never lost an opportunity

<sup>1</sup> See "Archives de l'art Français," i, 193-256 and v, 189-286.



of a bargain, and was an astute and skilful opportunist rather than a statesman. But to Colbert, with his amazing grasp of administrative organization, a State-aided establishment in Rome was only the logical consequence of the Academies of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in Paris. In January 1664 the projects for the completion of the Louvre were being discussed, and it was decided that the designs of Le Vau were to be sent to Poussin in Rome, with a covering letter drafted by Charles Perrault. In this letter<sup>1</sup> Perrault was to inform Poussin that the King had decided to send to Rome every year certain students, to be selected by the Academy in Paris, "parce qu'il semble encore nécessaire aux jeunes gens de votre profession de faire quelque séjour à Rome pour s'y former le goût et la manière sur les originaux et les modèles des plus grands maîtres de l'antiquité et des siècles derniers." The students were to be under "quelque maître illustre"; and Perrault was instructed to invite Poussin to undertake the post, sending him 1,200 crowns as an inducement. This letter for some reason was never sent, and Poussin, who was then seventy-one, died in the following year (1665). Colbert, however, proceeded with his scheme. In September 1664 he announced that the first prize in the King's Competition was won by Meunier with a picture of the winning of the Golden Fleece, and the second by Corneille with a picture of Danaë. Rogè, a sculptor, was third with a bas-relief of Marsyas. In November the Academy reported that Meunier and Corneille "sont en estat de profiter en l'étude du dict art en Italie, quand il plaira à Sa Majesté de les envoyer" ("Correspondance des Directeurs," i, 3), and in December of the same year M. de Metz attended a meeting of the Academy and announced that Colbert had ordered the payment of the necessary sums for the journey of students to Rome and their maintenance there during their course of study. It was not, however, till 1666 that a start was actually made. On March 6 of that year the "Procès-Verbaux" of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture record that "Monsieur Errard a pris congé de l'Académie, expérant partire pour son voyage de Romme avant qu'elle s'assemble une autre fois. La Compagnie fèsant des vœux pour l'heureux succètz des intansions du Roy en l'establissement de l'Académie a Romme et pour la prospérité du voyage de Mond-Sieur Errard, lui a recommandé<sup>2</sup> les estudians que serontz sous sa direction."

<sup>1</sup> "Corresp. des Directeurs de l'Académie de France a Rome," ed. A. de Montaiglon, i, 1.

<sup>2</sup> "Procès-Verbaux de l'Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture," A. de Montaiglon, i, 303.

Errard started for Rome in March, 1666, with twelve students; Corneille, who was only sixteen, the winner of the first King's Prize with Pierre Meunier, and Etienne Baudet engraver, having started on foot "par un froid humide" in 1665.<sup>1</sup> Bernini, who had a pension from the King, was consulted by Colbert, and promised to look after the sculptors, and suggested that instead of spending ten years at Rome, from fifteen to twenty-five, in learning drawing, which was the usual custom, students should be allowed to devote every other day to the practice of painting and sculpture. The Statutes and Regulations were issued in 1666. The Academy was to consist of twelve young men, who must be Frenchmen of the Roman Catholic religion, namely, six painters, four sculptors, and two architects under the control of a King's Painter, to be called the Rector of the Academy. A house was to be bought, or hired, with two studios, and this house "estant dédiée a la vertu doit estre en singuliere vénération à tous ceux qui y logeront" (Article 3). The students were to keep on good terms with each other on pain of expulsion.<sup>2</sup> Colbert, by the way, was very strict in enforcing this regulation. He entirely forbade the students to carry swords, and on more than one occasion instructed the Director to turn incorrigible students into the street. The appointments to the Academy could only be made when vacancies in the twelve occurred, and the procedure laid down was that the Rector notified the *Surintendant des Bâtiments* that a vacancy had occurred, and the latter then made his selection from the winners of the Grand Prix<sup>3</sup> in Paris (Article 5). Colbert, however, certainly went outside the regulations,<sup>4</sup> and appears on occasion to have sent deserving young men to the Academy on his own initiative, and J. H. Mansart grossly abused his power of nomination. The students were to have their meals together, one student being told off by the Rector to read history during the meal. They were to get up at five in the summer and six in the winter, and go to bed at ten, not omitting to say their prayers.<sup>5</sup> They were to devote two hours a day to the

<sup>1</sup> Guillet de S. Georges, "Mémoires inédits des Académiciens," i, 385. This writer says that Errard suggested to Colbert the establishment of the Academy at Rome, in order to avoid the competition of Le Brun who had been appointed to the Conseil des Bâtiments, and also to recover some 30,000 livres due to him for work done for the King. He did not, however, obtain payment of this sum till 1670. See "Comptes," i, 473.

<sup>2</sup> "Corresp. des Directeurs," i, 9.

<sup>3</sup> The term "Grand Prix" is not used. In the "Correspondance" it is "Prix que le Roy a ordonné à l'Académie" or simply "Prix de l'Académie."

<sup>4</sup> E.g., in 1680 he nominated de Lespine. See "Correspondance," i, 93.

<sup>5</sup> Article 7.



study of arithmetic, geometry, perspective, and architecture, and the rest of their time to the course of study prescribed by the Rector. Lectures and demonstrations in anatomy were to be arranged by the Rector in the winter. The Rector was to be regarded as supreme within the School, he had authority to expel disorderly students,<sup>1</sup> and he on his part was bound to inspect each student's work every day. Colbert had no idea of sinecures, and was determined to have value for his money. In Article 11 he expressly forbade any student to work for anyone but His Majesty. The painters were to copy all the good pictures in Rome, the sculptors were to copy ancient statues, and the architects were to make plans and elevations of all the fine buildings in Rome and its neighbourhood. Many of these copies were sent to France and personally inspected by Colbert, who sent the pictures to the Royal Tapestry manufactories, and seems to have done very well with the work of his students, but the scheme on the whole was liberally conceived. The Academy was to be open gratuitously to strangers when the model was posed, provided the Rector's consent was first obtained. Finally, every month the Rector was to make a careful report<sup>2</sup> to the *Surintendant des Bâtiments* on the progress of the Academy, and on any likely bargains.

In 1667 30,250 livres<sup>3</sup> were set aside for a house for the Academy, and the expenses for that year seem to have been 15,125 livres.

In 1669 the French Ambassador reported to Colbert that Errard was running the Academy very well, and added that he had told him to keep his eyes on any pictures by Veronese, Correggio, Titian, Tintoretto, Palma and others that were to be sold in the suppressed convents of the Venetian State. Errard was, in fact, not only Rector of the Academy, but agent for the State for purchase of works of art in Italy, and the contents of Colbert's letters are divided between minute instructions in regard to individual students, and often impatient inquiries as to statues and pictures to be purchased for the King, for Colbert appears to have contemplated little less than the sack of Italy in the interests of France. In 1669<sup>4</sup> he writes to Errard: "Comme nous devons faire en sorté d'avoir en France, tout ce qu'il y a de beau

<sup>1</sup> In 1683 Errard was instructed by Colbert to expel a nephew of Liberal Bruant ("Correspondance," i, 227).

<sup>2</sup> This in 1680 was altered to a fortnight. In his latter days Colbert became irritable and almost fussy in his anxiety. D'Antin insisted on once every three months J. H. Mansart didn't trouble his head about the students at all.

<sup>3</sup> "Comptes des Bâtiments," i, 177, 233.

<sup>4</sup> "Correspondance," i, 27.

en Italie, vous jugez bien qu'il est de conséquence de travailler incessamment pour y parvenir." Errard was on no account to let anyone know he was acting for the King, otherwise prices would be raised, and Colbert was much pleased with Errard's economical suggestion that the casts of the column of Trajan should be sent to France in the empty boats of the S. Malo Fishing Fleet.<sup>1</sup> In 1670 the Duc de Chaulnes asked Colbert to buy the Ludovisi Palace, and Errard, who was instructed to examine it and its contents, reported in 1671 that the proprietor asked 748,000 livres for the Palace, the Vigna and their contents. The Italians were quite alive to the value of their property, but they found their match in Colbert, who declined to buy unless the price was reduced considerably. It was not till 1737 that the Palazzo Mancini was bought for 190,000 livres.

Under the able direction of Charles Errard the young Academy in Rome made a brilliant start, and a medal was struck in Errard's honour in 1671, but the term of his first appointment for five years was now finished, and in 1672 Noel Coypel, the painter, was appointed to succeed him.<sup>2</sup> Colbert's instructions were precise and masterful, as usual. Coypel was to take care of his students, but also and more particularly to look out for any works of art that were to be bought à *bon marché*, and he was to keep on good terms with Bernini. Coypel's Directorate began with a quarrel with Errard, for which he was coldly rebuked by Colbert, but otherwise passed without incident.

In 1673 he returned to Paris, and Errard resumed the Directorship of the French Academy in Rome; and held it till he retired in 1683, dying in 1689 at the age of eighty-eight. The chief event of his second Directorship was the attempt to join the Academy of France and the Academy of S. Luke at Rome into one body. In 1676 Le Brun was made Director and Prince of the Academy of S. Luke, and letters patent were issued by the King sanctioning the union of the two bodies. In spite of these formalities, however, the two bodies were never, in

<sup>1</sup> In April, 1670, Errard dispatched 300 cases of casts to France ("Correspondance," i, 28).

<sup>2</sup> According to Jean Rou (quoted by de Montaignon, "Correspondance," i, 37) this was the result of Coypel's intrigues with Le Brun: "Son assiduité même ne fût pas une simple cour de grimaces: il alla d'abord au solide et . . . on peut dire que, s'il n'entra pas tout à fait par la porte d'or dans la maison de son mécène (Le Brun) il s'en ouvrit au moins le passage par une magnifique allée d'orangers qu'un beau matin de sa fête, il fit trouver à point nommé dans la basse cour de son agréable lieu de Montmorency . . . au bout de quelques jours la belle allée d'orangers le conduisit tout droit dans le grand chemin de Rome."



fact, united. "Il n'y a jamais eu que de bonnes relations intermittentes, et l'en aurait plutôt supprimé l'académie de France à Rome que de la confier à des mains étrangères."<sup>1</sup>

In this year (1676) further regulations as to the school in Rome were issued, and it is suggestive that for the first time the school is called "L'Académie Française d'architecture, peinture et sculpture établie a Rome," a hint of the hegemony of architecture in the arts a few years later. Le Nôtre, who was in Italy on a roving commission for the King, visited the school in 1679, and about this time Daviler, who was a student, attracted Colbert's attention, and appears frequently in his correspondence with Errard. In 1680 the owner of the house where the Academy was established, declined to renew his lease, and proposals were made for the purchase of a house, but it does not appear from the correspondence that anything came of the proposals, and the Academy continued to hire its quarters. In 1683 it appears to have had a palace in one part of Rome, and one at least of its ateliers in another.<sup>2</sup> The Academy seems to have been well provided with models and casts from the antique. In 1684 the atelier possessed plaster casts of thirteen antique statues including the Laocoon, an Apollo, an Antinous, and a Mercury, and at the palace, which was the headquarters of the Academy, there were some twenty-eight more and many busts from the antique. Some of these were copied by the students in marble and sent to France for the Royal houses and gardens. In addition there were a number of terra-cotta figures, busts, and bas-reliefs made by the students after the antique, or of their own invention. The Academy had also a considerable quantity of marble, the bulk of it already packed in cases to be sent to France, and the remainder stored at the Academy for copies of the antique by the students. The household furniture, on the other hand, was extremely scanty and what there was was worn out.<sup>3</sup> Colbert died in 1683 and in that year Errard resigned his Directorship and retired to a house in Rome where he died in 1689.<sup>4</sup> A certain La Teulière was appointed to succeed him by Louvois and held the post till 1699. Louvois' letter is curious. He recognizes, he says, that La Teulière is neither painter, sculptor nor architect, and therefore he only desired him to keep order and to see that the students did their work. Louvois was wholly indifferent to the arts, but evidently a keen man of

<sup>1</sup> "Correspondance," i, 144. Note by de Montaignon.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 121.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 138. "Tous les meubles des esclèves sont fort usée, surtout les matelas et couvertures, il n'y a que quatre couvertures médiocrement bonne."

<sup>4</sup> Errard was buried in the cloisters of St. Louis des François at Rome.

business, for in 1685 the whole of a long letter from La Teulière is taken up with answering Louvois' complaints as to the quality of certain marbles sent from Italy (i, 150). Under La Teulière the expense of the Academy at Rome was doubled. In 1670 its cost was 15,125 livres. In 1671 the sum assigned for the Academies of Painting and Sculpture in Paris and in Rome was only 20,000 livres. In 1686 the cost of the Academy at Rome was 45,483. 17. 0.<sup>1</sup> The King was getting into the hands of inferior men. Louvois had nothing like so firm a grasp of administration and finance as Colbert, and Jules Hardouin Mansart had risen into dangerous favour with the King. La Teulière's correspondence with Louvois is more occupied with his purchases and their shipping than with the work of the students. Occasionally he mentions that the students are doing well and gives particulars of the progress of individual students, and there is rather a pathetic letter describing his troubles with a certain sculptor student named Théodor to whom he had advanced money but who was for ever making excuses about the delay of his work. In 1691 Colbert de Villacerf succeeded Louvois as *Surintendant*. The State chest was empty and Villacerf was for ever impressing on La Teulière the necessity of cutting down expenses everywhere. In 1694, the year that Louis had to withdraw the subvention of the Academies in Paris, there was serious talk of closing down the Academy in Rome. There was no money and the Italians were hostile. The Pope had threatened to dispossess the Academy of its house, though he appears to have thought better of it; but La Teulière had to reduce the establishment ("Correspondance," ii, 41) all round. The teachers of anatomy and mathematics were dismissed and poor La Teulière, who was neither architect, painter nor sculptor, had to undertake their work himself. The places of the two retiring Pensionaries, Lignères and Lorrain, the sculptor, were not filled up, and only three pensionaries were left in the School.<sup>2</sup> La Teulière's position must have become more and more difficult. He says of the Italians: "Ils n'ayment point du tout" the French and put every difficulty in their way, and he reported to Villacerf in 1692 that Carlo Maratti was doing all he could to injure them with the Pope (i, 283).

In 1699 Villacerf resigned and J. H. Mansart was appointed to succeed him as *Surintendant des Bâtiments*. La Teulière introduced himself to Mansart and the latter assured him in reply that he was well

<sup>1</sup> "Comptes des Bâtiments du Roi," ii, 1013.

<sup>2</sup> In 1676 there had been 13 pensionaries, viz., 4 painters, 5 sculptors, 4 architects ("Correspondance," i, 62).



aware of his merits and that there was no intention of removing him from his post of Director. But within a week of writing this letter Mansart wrote on 4 March 1699: "Je suis très fasché et bien mortifié d'estre dans la nécessité de vous apprendre que le Roy a disposé de votre place en faveur de M. Houasse, Sa Majesté desirant que ce soit un habile Peintre, qui ay la directions de l'académie." La Teulière replied on 30 March in a very dignified letter, but it is evident that Mansart, who was treacherous and unscrupulous, was playing with him all the time. In spite of urgent appeals he did not send La Teulière the money due to him not only as salary but for advances made to the students by the Director out of his own pocket. In April La Teulière wrote to him: "Vous m'abbondonnés bien à ma mauvaise fortune en retranchant jusqu'aux secours les plus ordinaires dans les plus pressans besoins" and pointed out to Mansart that for five or six months, though he was in charge of the establishment, he had been utterly deserted. Mansart, who screened himself by not answering La Teulière's letters, did finally send him some money at the end of May, but never replied to his repeated requests for some explanation of the reason for his dismissal. The real reason was probably one of those abominable intrigues that disgraced the Court of Louis XIV, and there can be no doubt that Mansart himself was privy to it. La Teulière retired to a small house in Rome with what was left of his private means and died a broken man in 1702. With Houasse began the hierarchy of Painters who, with the solitary exception of a sculptor for one month,<sup>1</sup> directed the Academy at Rome, till its abolition at the French Revolution. The result was unfortunate. Painters are perhaps the least sympathetic of artists. Possibly their enthusiasm for their own art is so great that they find it difficult to conceive of art in other terms than those of painting. Possibly the fact that they must begin their technical training young prevents them from completing their general education, but in the result they seem unable to regard art from the point of view of the architect and the sculptor.

Houasse had little trouble in getting from Mansart twice the amount of money that had been shamelessly withheld from La Teulière.<sup>2</sup> Mansart's conduct was peculiarly outrageous, because as *Surintendant* he was completely master of the situation, and a word from him would

<sup>1</sup> Wleughels died suddenly of apoplexy in December 1737. Lestache, a sculptor who had for years resided in Rome, was appointed, *ad interim*, but was superseded by de Troy, painter to the King.

<sup>2</sup> "Correspondance," iii, 22.

have saved La Teulière. That word was not spoken, and La Teulière was dismissed. Mansart, who refused his urgent appeal for a few hundred francs to go on with, was himself drawing a salary of over 60,000 francs a year, which he paid to himself as *Surintendant* out of the funds set aside for the royal buildings.

Mansart's administration, 1699-1708, was disastrous to the French Academy in Rome, and was of a piece with the whole of his career. His own extraordinary success was mainly due to his relentless pursuit of his own interest. The Academy was far away from Paris, the King had long ceased to take any personal interest in its affairs, and so far as Mansart was concerned there was nothing to be made out of the School. He therefore regarded it with callous indifference. His letters to Houasse and Poerson were curt and scanty. The only general instructions given to the Director were that he was to keep Mansart informed as to "des choses essentielles qui se passeront à Rome"<sup>1</sup>—in other words, the gossip of Rome and the tittle-tattle of the Vatican—and when at length he sent Houasse some money, he instructed him only to spend what was "absolutely and indispensably necessary." Yet at the same time Houasse was to spare nothing in the entertainment of Mansart's son, the Comte de Sagonne, who visited Rome to qualify as a connoisseur in pictures, and three years later Mansart nominated his nephews, the two young Hardouins, to the Academy with instructions to the Director to provide them each with a pension of 1,000 livres, five times the regular allowance for a pensionary. They seem to have been a pair of worthless scamps. The elder complained that his pension was inadequate and that in Paris he had been used to a valet of his own, horses, and a wardrobe "garnie d'habitz de chasse et de ville avec un bonne table."<sup>2</sup> Soon afterwards he was involved in a discreditable affair in the garden of the Villa Borghese, after which for his own safety he had to keep within the walls of the Academy till he could be smuggled out of Italy.<sup>3</sup> As to the other Hardouin, he had no idea of being an artist at all, being already an Abbé, and in Rome merely to qualify for higher promotion. The two Hardouins were given the best rooms in the Academy, including part of the Director's own suite. Yet meanwhile, the Academy was so short of money that it could hardly carry on. The Director had to advance money and borrow it of his friends in Rome, and the Pensionaries had even raised a sum out of their own

<sup>1</sup> "Correspondance," iii, 38.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, 113.

<sup>3</sup> In Paris the family connection was still strong enough in 1720 to get him into the Academy. He died in 1737.



meagre allowances to pay the fees of an instructor in mathematics. The Director informed Mansart of this and urged him to apply to the King for a grant for the repayment of the students and the salary of the teachers. Mansart, with incredible meanness, not only did not apply to the King, but never even answered the Director's letter.

The result of Mansart's attitude was that the Academy very nearly went out. The numbers were reduced to four, or rather three, for one of them was the miserable Abbé Hardouin, and things had come to such a pass that in July, 1707, Poerson, the Director, wrote to Mansart advising the King to close the Academy in Rome altogether. The Court, he says, "toute allemande," was hostile; the best pictures were not shown; with the exception of the Pantheon, the Colosseum and a few columns, there were few remains of antiquity to instruct students in architecture; moreover (the words are those of the astute Director) "les excelants et admirables ouvrages dont vous (Mansart) avez ornée la France, sont des moyens plus sûres pour faire de bons architectes que tout ce que l'on voit dans Rome."<sup>1</sup> In spite of this fulsome flattery, Mansart again made no reply, but fortunately for the Academy and the arts of France, Mansart died suddenly at Marly, in May, 1708, and was succeeded as *Directeur des Bâtiments* by Le Marquis D'Antin,<sup>2</sup> who at once wrote to Poerson in most kindly terms and sent him 12,000 livres to go on with. Poerson sent him a long and very interesting letter,<sup>3</sup> sketching the history of the Academy up to date, to which D'Antin replied in his clear masterful way, reorganizing the Academy on a firm disciplinary basis, dismissing the Abbé Hardouin from the Academy, "étant à Rome uniquement pour ses affaires particulières," and bluntly remarking to Poerson that in future he might cut out all the flattery. Poerson withdrew his resignation and continued to act as Director of the Academy till his death in September, 1725.<sup>4</sup> Had Mansart lived, the Academy in Rome must have perished outright, owing to his scandalous neglect and his gross abuse of his position as *Surintendant*. D'Antin, his successor, was a man of honour, a gentle-

<sup>1</sup> "Correspondance," iii, 208.

<sup>2</sup> Son of M. and Mme. de Montespan. He became the Duc d'Antin in 1711, and first signed as d'Antin in June, 1711. He received the Cordon blue of the Order of the Saint Esprit in 1724.

<sup>3</sup> "Correspondance," iii, 217, 223.

<sup>4</sup> Poerson was buried in the Church of S. Louis des Français in Rome, and is described on his epitaph as President of the French Academy, a member of the Order of our Lady of Mont Carmel and St. Lazarus, a member of the Arcades and Prince of the Academy of S. Luke in Rome.

man of great condition who, as he said, was only there to see the King's commands punctually executed, and who discharged his duties with firmness and absolute integrity. As was inevitable, the first fine enthusiasm of both d'Antin and Poerson slackened a little as time went on. Poerson's letters, apart from business details, refer less and less to the students, and more and more to the "choses essentielles" of politics and society in Rome, but the students were by no means neglected as they had been in Mansart's time. In 1722 Poerson was instructed to report to d'Antin regularly every three months on the progress of the students.<sup>1</sup> In 1723 he refers to six students among whom were Bouchardon and Adam, the sculptors, Natoire, the painter, and two architects. In 1724 there were seven pensionaries.<sup>2</sup> Wleughels, the painter, or "Veugles," which was the nearest approach to his name that d'Antin could make, was nominated as Joint Director with Poerson in 1724. In 1725 the negotiations were completed for the hiring of the Palais Mancini for a rent of 1,000 écus Romains.<sup>3</sup> D'Antin wrote: "Je suis charmé d'apprendre que le bail du Palais Manchini est signé et que l'académie du Roy sera dans toute sa splendeur à Rome."<sup>4</sup> The Academy was installed in the Palace in July, 1725.<sup>5</sup> D'Antin wrote that there was to be no cheeseparing about the furniture and decorations and that it was in all ways to be made worthy of its object. Poerson, now old and infirm, was becoming very troublesome, but d'Antin wrote to Wleughels, "D'avoir des ménagemens pour le Sr. Poerson; son grand âge mérite des égards," and the old man died within the month. Throughout the correspondence the attitude of d'Antin contrasts most favourably with that of Mansart. The latter, ignorant and half educated (he could not spell), with the instincts of a commercial traveller, was incapable of appreciating the importance of Colbert's work, finding it of no use to himself. His appointment as *Surintendant* was perhaps the most disastrous of any of the blunders of Louis XIV. D'Antin was a gentleman, with a clear sense of public duty, and a most intelligent understanding of the purpose and province of the Academy at Rome. He made it plain at once that he would stand no nonsense; on the other hand, all his letters display the utmost candour, and a careful consideration for the difficulties and feelings of other people. He was almost as exact in his inquiries as Colbert himself, and insisted on regular

<sup>1</sup> "Correspondance," vi, 193.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vi, 311.

<sup>3</sup> Equal to 9,000 livres.

<sup>4</sup> "Correspondance," vii, 173.

<sup>5</sup> For a description of the Palace see Wleughels' letter to d'Antin, "Correspondance," vii, 181.



reports. In 1735 Wleughels reported to d'Antin that there were eight pensionaries in the school, among them Slodtz, the sculptor, who had been there since 1728, Franque, architect, since 1733, and Soufflot who had just joined (viii, 146) nominated by d'Antin himself. In this year the total cost of the school, including 6,000 livres for furniture, was 36,329 4.<sup>1</sup> In 1736 Wleughels informed d'Antin that Franque desired to leave the Academy.<sup>2</sup> D'Antin replied promptly, "Ce n'est pas assez. Je vous ordonne de m'en dire le bien et le mal: quand ces gens la viennent à se présenter devant moy, que voulez vous que je leur dise, si je ne les connois d'aucune manière." It is refreshing to find again the Colbert touch, direct, unhesitating and searching, yet tempered, as it was with d'Antin, by the humour and consideration of a gentleman.

D'Antin died in October, 1736, Wleughels a year later. Under the firm control of d'Antin the directorates of Poerson and of Wleughels were perhaps the most brilliant period in the whole history of the old French Academy at Rome. Philibert Orry, who succeeded d'Antin, was a good man of business, but not greatly interested in the arts. He drew up a fresh set of regulations, of which the gist was that the work of the students was the property of the King, that "le palais de l'académie est une maison d'étude," and that the students were there to learn their business, and not for their personal gain. But he sanctioned the important purchase by the State for the Academy of the Palazzo Mancini in Rome at the price of 190,000 livres.<sup>3</sup> Wleughels reported "Le palais est beau et bon, tout neuf, bien bâti et sûrement dans la plus belle situation de Rome," that it was worth 240,000 livres, and

<sup>1</sup> "Correspondance," viii, 154.

<sup>2</sup> A suggestive sidelight is thrown on the methods of patronage in the eighteenth century by a letter of Wleughels to d'Antin in reference to young Franque. Wleughels informed him that Franque, on leaving Rome, did not intend to settle in Paris. "C'est un architecte de province qui dessine passablement, avec une génie très modéré," and that he only got into the Academy in Rome as the result of strong pressure from "personnes de consequence" at Avignon, including a letter from a bishop who had assured Wleughels that young Franque was a marvel, of a genius surpassing all architects, past and present. Wleughels remarked on the shamelessness of people who made these ridiculous exaggerations: "Franque est un très bon garçon, très sage, qui sera bon pour sa province." Admission to the Academy in Rome was still largely a matter of patronage; under Mansart it had been a matter of shameless jobbery. D'Antin's comment was "pour l'ordinaire les recommandations servent à couvrir l'incapacité" ("Correspondance," ix, 284).

<sup>3</sup> Bought of the Marquis de Mancini "Prince romain et noble Vénitien, demeurant a Paris à l'Hôtel de Louvois, Rue de Richelieu." Mancini belonged to the family of Mazarin (see "Correspondance," ix, 520). De Brosses wrote in 1740 that the façade alone was worth the price of the whole building.

that it had cost twice that amount to build. The Academy was now splendidly housed and held in high esteem, and here it peacefully passed the rest of its days, till its dissolution in 1793;<sup>1</sup> Lestache, a sculptor, carried on as Director till the arrival of de Troy in 1738; de Troy was Director till his death in 1752, succeeded by Natoire, who died at Castel Gandolfo in 1777. The real difficulty with the Academy at Rome was to preserve its function as a *maison d'étude* rather than a centre of social entertainment. De Brosses, writing in 1739, remarked that the pupils were lodged in the *entresols*, the Director was housed "assez grandement" on the second floor, "de sorte que le premier, garni de riches meubles de la Couronne, reste toujours inutile et vacant, a moins de certaines occasions de cérémonies ou de fêtes données par l'ambassadeur." De Troy, the Director, considered himself "presque une seigneur," and kept open house. The sculptors and painters came in for some little notice, but I find little or no reference to architects. Like the Academy of Painting and Sculpture in Paris, the Academy in Rome became more and more a social affair, and it probably brought about its own extinction. Without a complete new start the splendid work since done by the Second French School in Paris would hardly have been possible.

The correspondence of the Directors of the Academy with the *Surintendants des Bâtiments* is very voluminous and full of interest. The names of artists that afterwards became famous appear among the lists of students, and valuable sidelight is thrown on the state of the arts in Italy at the time. The letters of Colbert and Errard are the most suggestive part of the whole correspondence. Colbert was very much in earnest. He reiterated his instructions on points of detail, treating Errard, an artist of considerable distinction, with scanty ceremony, and personally interfering with the direction of the school. Twice in one letter he uses the phrase: "J'attends avec impatience," certain information he had asked for from Errard.<sup>2</sup> A month later he said: "Je suis étonné de n'avoir reçu encore aucun avis de vous." In 1682 he wrote to Errard from Sceaux, telling him to be careful to execute his instructions in regard to the School *ponctuellement*, and, indeed, nothing was allowed to escape his formidable control. On the other hand, Colbert was too clear-headed a man to imagine that the Academy at Rome would work marvels. Writing to Le Nôtre in Rome in 1679<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Villa Medici was not bought till 1803, after the re-establishment of the school in 1801.

<sup>2</sup> "Correspondance," i, 110.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 85.



he says: "Vous avez raison de dire que le génie et le bon goust, viennent de Dieu, et qu'il est très difficile de les donner aux hommes, mais quoique nous ne tirions pas de grands sujets de les Académies, elles ne laissent pas de servir à perfectionner les ouvriers, et à nous en donner de meilleurs qu'il n'y en a jamais eu en France." This was the true Colbert. He never lost sight of the idea of the *pépinière d'ouvriers*.<sup>1</sup> He approached the arts solely from the point of view of the statesman, good workmen meant good trade and prosperity in France; and the arts and crafts thus took their place in Colbert's scheme of Government as contributing to the stability and glory of the State. Seven years before he had written to Errard that His Majesty, in spite of the wars, would continue his care of the arts, "avec d'autant plus de soin qu'ils pourront servir à éterniser ses grandes et glorieuses actions." Voltaire's imaginary portrait in "Le Temple du Goust"<sup>2</sup> is famous. He describes Colbert as standing in the Temple surrounded by the great men of the age of Louis XIV. "Je n'ay exécuté, disoit ce ministre, que la moindre partie de ce que je méditois. J'aurois voulu que Louis XIV eut employé aux embellissements nécessaires de la Capitale, les Trésors ensévelis dans Versailles et prodigués pour forcer la nature. Si j'avois vécu plus longtemps, Paris aurait pû surpasser Rome en magnificence et en bon goust comme il le surpasse en grandeur. Ceux qui viendront après moi, feront ce que j'ai seulement imaginé. Alors le Royaume sera remply des monumens de tous les beaux arts." Colbert's sagacity was justified in the result, for it was to this careful nursing and training that France owed her supremacy of the arts in Europe in the eighteenth century. Nor can it be said that he started the school on an extravagant scale. Twelve students at 200 livres apiece<sup>3</sup> per annum was certainly not an excessive expenditure for the great Court of France. Moreover, as already pointed out, Colbert got much of his money back in the work that the students were bound to do for the King alone—a condition not always accepted gratefully by the students themselves, "des jeunes gens qui ne s'attachent pas à un ouvrage de longue haleine,"<sup>3</sup> but the students had

<sup>1</sup> "Le Temple du Goust," ed. 1733, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> The sum now assigned to students at the Villa Medici amounts to something under £200 a year. The scholarships awarded to students in the recently founded British School at Rome are now at the rate of £250 per annum. In its earlier years the cost of the Academy in Rome does not appear to have been much above 15,000 livres a year, but in 1685 the cost for the first three months was 9,521l. 10s. 9d., and in 1686 the cost was 45,483l. 17s.

<sup>3</sup> Mignard to Villacerf, "Correspondance," i, 223. Mignard pointed out that the

to do what they were told. Nor was the Director by any means his own master. His duties<sup>1</sup> were strictly defined by Colbert. He was to apply himself diligently to the instruction of the young painters, sculptors, and architects maintained by His Majesty in the Academy, and in addition to this "vous devez encore rechercher avec soin tout ce que vous trouvez de beau en bustes, figures, bas-reliefs et autre beaux ouvrages de l'ancienne Rome," and if they were to be had cheap was to buy them, for neither Colbert nor his successors had any idea of giving the Director carte-blanc. He was also to keep the painters and sculptors fully employed in making copies of masterpieces for the King. In reply to this letter Coypel wrote with some spirit: "Les peinteurs son dégoûtez de copier," and in 1688<sup>2</sup> they appear to have broken out again, for Louvois writes to La Teulière expressing his surprise at the impertinent conduct of his students.

As Louis XIV became involved in his ruinous wars it became more and more difficult to meet the expenses of the school, and had it not been for its use as an agency for the purchase of works of art, probably Louvois would have closed down the Academy altogether. Colbert de Villacerf, his successor as *Surintendant des Bâtiments*, took a more enlightened view of the work of the school. He backed La Teulière with unfailing loyalty,<sup>3</sup> and during the fifteen years of the latter's Directorate the students were probably better looked after than at any other period in the history of the school. La Teulière advanced them money from his own purse, helped them in every possible way with their work, and took a keen personal interest in their careers. In 1691 he urged Villacerf to send only students who were sufficiently advanced to profit by the school, and who were of the right temperament and character. A single disorderly student was, he pointed out, enough to upset the school. Nor did he want students who thought that in eighteen months they could make themselves the equals of Raphael and Michael Angelo, and whose sole idea was to make money as fast as possible.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, he spared himself no labour with promising students, such, for instance, as young Oppenord, who

students were not sufficiently advanced to undertake the copy of large pictures, but thought that at the end of their time and before they returned to France, they ought to be obliged to make a copy of some famous picture either for the manufacture des Gobelins or the Cabinet de Sa Majesté. Raphael in particular should be copied full size for reproductions in tapestry.

<sup>1</sup> Colbert to Coypel.

<sup>2</sup> "Correspondance," i, 95.

<sup>3</sup> "C'etoit un très bon homme et fort homme d'honneur" (Saint-Simon, "Mémoires").

<sup>4</sup> "Correspondance," i, 226.



was at the school in 1692-8. The letters of Houasse to Mansart give a very different impression of the school; possibly he was no writer; anyhow, his letters are chiefly occupied with requests for money, and show no personal interest in any of the students, unless it was Mansart's nephews. Poerson, the painter, who succeeded Houasse in 1704, usually filled his letters with gossip about society in Rome. Writing to d'Antin in 1715 he assures him "que nous sommes très bien reçu chez la principal noblesse de Rome"<sup>1</sup>—not a word about the students. The position of Director had altered. The energy and enthusiasm of Errard and La Teulière were out of fashion. In 1737 the Duc de S. Aignan, Ambassador of France at Rome, writing to Amelot on the death of Wleughels,<sup>2</sup> says that the post "sera fort recherchée," and that among the qualifications for it were "la bonne conduite et l'usage du pays." The position was a difficult one in any case; the Academy formed a sort of enclave in the middle of Rome; difficulties of jurisdiction did nothing to mitigate the innate Italian jealousy of the "foreigner," and a good deal of tact and social address were necessary to maintain the position in face of the latent animosity of the Italians. In addition to this, Rome itself at this period was socially rotten. In 1692<sup>3</sup> La Teulière writes: "Rome est si miserable et le temps si mauvais, que l'on trouve partout des vendeurs sans nombre et pas un acheteur." Of their painters he says, "ils ont négligés depuis un assez longtemps le bon goust de Raphael pour suivre une manière libertine, sous prétexte de donner du brillant." In another letter, dwelling on the importance of good drawing, he points out that there were painters who maintained that there was no need for correctness of drawing and anatomy, "croyant peut-être par la mettre leurs ouvrages et leurs mauvais goust à couvert d'une juste critique."<sup>4</sup> The antique, which was all in all to the Frenchman, was now nothing to the Italian. He resented its restraint, and his licentious art was a faithful reflex of the disordered society of his time. In the result the austere standards set by the earlier Directors, the insistence on correct draughtsmanship, and a close study of the antique and of the work of the great masters of the Italian

<sup>1</sup> "Correspondance," iii, 147.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ix, 329. He calls him "Veugles."

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 353-4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 340. One is reminded of certain phases of recent art. Writing in December, 1692, La Teulière says: "Pietro de Cortone et son escole y a répandu un si grand libertinage, sous prétexte de donner du brillant, que la plupart de leurs ouvrages sont comme les clinquans des habits de Comédie" (*ibid.*, i, 341), but La Teulière was no prophet. Tiepolo was born in 1696 and Canaletto in 1697.

Renaissance, were gradually relaxed. Oppenord, for example, the favourite pupil of the Academy, of whom La Teulière hoped so much, was allowed to make studies of a modern building, the Jesuit Church of S. Ignatius, and he brought back to France sketch books full of the worst details of late seventeenth century Italian architecture, on which a few years later he built up a considerable if ephemeral reputation. Yet on the whole, and in regard to the essential qualities of architecture, the Academies made good. They maintained the gravity of manner, the sense of scale and proportion which were their most cherished ideals, and did in fact do much to realize the ideals of Colbert. He aimed at making French artists the first craftsmen of the world, and he succeeded. Colbert also succeeded in solving a problem which had been the despair of our reformers in England: that of bringing artists and manufacturers into touch. In this country, in spite of fifty years of effort, we have not yet succeeded in bridging over the gulf that lies between them, but Colbert, by his vigorous and, it must be admitted, somewhat arbitrary measures, provided the manufacturers with the best designs available, and found constant employment for artists and workmen in the production and execution of these designs. The establishment of the great State-aided manufactures of the Gobelins, La Savonnerie, and Beauvais was the necessary complement to the foundation of the Academies with their schools of teaching, and more particularly of the Academy at Rome. Colbert was untiring in his efforts to collect first-rate craftsmen from every source and every country in order that they might teach the native workmen how to carry out designs, either from the antique or supplied by Le Brun and the artists working under his directions. Where Colbert was so successful was in welding together the arts and manufactures of France, so that instead of schools, academies, and manufactures existing as isolated and unrelated units, they combined in close and intimate relation for the directly practical purpose of production. At the Gobelins, says M. Guiffrey, "sous la suprême direction du grand ordonnateur de tous les travaux d'art du temps de Louis XIV, de Charles Le Brun, s'est groupée une nombreuse colonie d'artistes distingués dans les genres les plus variés, comprenant à la fois des sculpteurs, des peinteurs, des dessinateurs, des graveurs, des tapissiers, des orfèvres, des marqueteurs, des lapidaires, des fondeurs, des ciseleurs, admirable école d'art décoratif, qui a exercé une profonde influence sur le goût français." Without a drastic reorganization, similar to, but not necessarily identical with, that of Colbert, it is difficult to see how the



arts of this country are to be rescued from the chaos into which they have been sinking deeper and deeper since the days of 1851. We have yet to introduce organized system into our training institutions, and have yet to induce our manufacturers to prefer quality to cheapness.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ROYAL BUILDING STAFF

ONE of the first of Colbert's reforms was the reorganization of the great spending departments. During the last ten years of his life Mazarin had been to all intents the uncrowned King of France. He had amassed fabulous wealth, and lived in almost Royal state. The finances were a mystery. In 1653 he appointed Fouquet, then *Procureur général* to the parliament of Paris, to the post of *Surintendant des Finances*, and the business of the latter was not only to receive money on the part of the State, but also and more particularly to raise it as best he could from the great financiers.<sup>1</sup> They on their part relied on Fouquet not only as a man of large private means, but also in his capacity as *Procureur général* to see them through, if any question was raised as to the legality of their transactions.<sup>2</sup> The situation was an impossible one. M. Lavissee says of the *Surintendant*: "Il lui (le Roi) prêtait comme particulier et se remboursait comme surintendant." Fouquet, a man of great ability and address, managed to carry on till the death of Mazarin and the real accession of Louis XIV. That monarch determined to be his own Prime Minister, and he found in Colbert the right instrument for his purpose, a man of inflexible determination, tremendously in earnest, austere in character, yet unscrupulous as to means, morally and intellectually as hard as steel. In

<sup>1</sup> Both they and the Receiver General had to advance money. Charles Perrault says that when his brother was Receiver General he found that in 1664 he was 400,000 livres in arrears owing to the King having remitted any arrears in the taxes of the last ten years, "libéralité admirable si elle n'eut point été faite aux dépens de receveurs généraux à qui ces restes appartenoient." Many of the Receivers General were broken (Perrault, "Mémoires," ed. Bonnefon, p. 119). Claude Perrault only recovered from the King 100,000 francs of the 400,000 due to him.

<sup>2</sup> See "Histoire de France," ed. Lavissee, vii, 1, 80, 81.



addition, he possessed a genius for organization almost unparalleled in history. The story of the fêtes at Vaux and Fouquet's disastrous fall is familiar.<sup>1</sup> It was the end of the old happy-go-lucky regime. The office of *Surintendant des Finances* was suppressed, but Colbert, though nominally only *Surintendant des Bâtiments* was to all intents First Lord of the Treasury, and it was in this way and from the financial side that he came into the control of the arts and industries of France.<sup>2</sup> It is also due to Colbert's genius to say that he at once saw the immense possibilities of profit to the State in their reorganization and development. The Venetian Ambassador in France, 1665-68, reported: "M. Colbert veut rendre le pays entier supérieur a tout autre en opulence, abondant en marchandises, riche en arts, et fécond en biens de toutes sortes, n'ayant besoin de rien et dispensateur de toutes choses aux autres états."<sup>3</sup>

Some sort of rudimentary organization of architects and artists in the Royal employment had existed since the days of François I. In his reign, instructions were issued and contracts made by the "Valet de Chambre," who was in fact a private secretary to the King and an important Court official.<sup>4</sup> In addition there was a Board of three Commissioners to certify the work after it had been measured by the King's master carpenters and masons and checked by the Valet de Chambre. By 1532 the position of the Commissioners and the Valet de Chambre appears to have been reversed. The latter advised and the Commissioners made the contracts, but the organization was extremely loose; contracts were made both by the Commissioners and by Treasury officials, and the only basis of contract was a model of the building and a "Devis," or specification. The general conditions of contract were the "use and custom" of Paris, and the method of measurement in use was the very casual "Toisé bout-avant," that is, measurement by surface only, without regard to architectural projections.<sup>5</sup> The results, as might have been expected in the absence of any expert control, were very unsatisfactory, the buildings were badly built and the

<sup>1</sup> See Mme. de Sevigné's letters for a contemporary account of his trial and subsequent fate. Colbert did all he could to get him executed, and Fouquet was only saved by the loyalty of his friends.

<sup>2</sup> Lavissee, vii, 2, 81, says he bought the office of *Surintendant des Bâtiments* in 1664. In the introduction to the "Comptes" by Jules Guiffrey he is said to have succeeded M. Ratabon on January 1, 1664.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Lavissee, vii, 1, 229.

<sup>4</sup> See "History of French Architecture, 1494-1661," Blomfield, i, 23, for further details.

<sup>5</sup> See Pierre Bullet, "Architecture Pratique" (ed. 1780), p. viii.

King was robbed right and left. Meanwhile the trained architect was coming to the front, and the first step towards a more efficient organization was taken when Philibert de l'Orme was appointed architect of Fontainebleau and other buildings about the middle of the sixteenth century. His masterful hand introduced some sort of order into the chaotic methods hitherto in use. Unfortunately, he was succeeded by a painter and a foreigner, Primaticcio, who neither understood the ways of the country or the practice of architecture. On his death in 1570 Bullant is supposed to have succeeded him as controller of the Royal buildings—though Lescot continued in charge of the new buildings of the Louvre till his death in 1578. There is mention of a commission appointed to deal with the expenditure on the Pont Neuf in 1573. This commission appointed another “pour avoir l'œil, soing et regard à la structure et bâtimens,” but the latter finally resolved itself into a committee of contractors, and it is evident that no really effective organization for dealing with State buildings as yet existed. Architects were appointed to individual buildings: Jacques Androuet du Cerceau to the Louvre, under Henri IV, Salomon de Brosse to the Luxembourg, Lemercier to the Louvre and other buildings. The title “architecte du Roi” existed and carried with it certain privileges, but I doubt if there was any real control, or anything like an organized Department of Works till Colbert took the matter in hand. It is most unfortunate that the earlier “Comptes des Bâtimens du Roi” stop at 1571<sup>1</sup> and it is not till 1664 that the “Comptes” are again available.<sup>2</sup> The “Comptes” are in fact the only trustworthy evidence as to Colbert's system of administration. At the head of all was Colbert himself as “Surintendant et ordonnateur général des Bâtimens, jardins, tapisseries et manufactures,” practically Minister of Fine Arts. The title first appears in full in the “Comptes” in 1669<sup>3</sup> and the salary attached at that date amounted to 15,000 francs. The actual salary was 12,000 francs per annum with which was consol-

<sup>1</sup> “Les Comptes des Bâtimens du Roi, 1528-1571,” Le Marquis Leon de Laborde, Paris, 1877-1880.

<sup>2</sup> See Guiffrey's introduction to “Comptes des Bâtimens du Roi sous le regne de Louis XIV,” vol. i, pp. vi-viii, for a list of the few fragments of accounts extant for the intervening period.

<sup>3</sup> “Comptes,” i, 292. In the earlier years the accounts were drawn up in a rather indiscriminate way. Prior to 1669, all the charges were lumped together, *e.g.*, 1666: “Pour les gages des officiers des maisons, bastimens de Sa Majesté, et appointemens des personnes rares en architecture, peinture, sculpture et autres arts entretenus pour son service pendant l'année 1666, 82051 f. 12 s. 6.” By 1675 this sum had risen to 200,000 francs; in 1682 it was 220,000.



ated a pension of 3,000 francs. In 1670 Colbert increased the salary by an additional 2,400 francs as *Surintendant des Bâtiments de Monceaux*, and in 1671 he added another 3,800 francs for the charge of Fontainebleau. When Colbert de Villacerf succeeded Louvois in 1691, the salary had risen to a total of 23,400 francs by the amalgamation of various appointments. In 1698 it had risen to 27,000 francs ("Comptes," iv, 432). When Mansart succeeded Villacerf in 1699 he managed to increase the salary to the enormous total of 60,886 francs; a sum equal, I believe, in buying value to something like £13,000 per annum. Under the *Surintendants* were various grades of officers. I. Three *Intendants et Ordonnateurs des dits bastimens*. These officers were appointed for three years at a salary of 6,000 francs a year, and they took office alternatively, for what reason I am unable to discover, as they were paid their salaries every year. Coquart de la Motte and Varin<sup>1</sup> were the first holders of this office. Unlike that of the *Surintendant* these salaries do not appear to have risen as time went on. II. Next to the *Intendants* came three *Contrôleurs général* at a rather lower salary (4,500 francs<sup>2</sup> per annum). Andre Le Nôtre held this office from 1668 till his death in 1700 with the Sr. Lefebvre as his colleague. These officers served alternatively in the same incomprehensible manner as the *Intendants*. The third place was not filled up till 1672 when Charles Perrault was promoted from the position of "un de nos commis."<sup>3</sup> Although the salaries were the same the Controllers were identified as *contrôleur ancien*, *contrôleur alternatif* and *contrôleur triennal*. In the "Comptes" for 1674 there is a memorandum by Colbert on Lefebvre's duties as *contrôleur général triennal* at Versailles. He was to see that the little park was kept in good order; check the labour sheets of the contractors, Colinot and Marin. He was to visit the Trianon often, see that Le Bouteux had flowers for the King in winter, keep the requisite number of men at work, and was to

<sup>1</sup> Jean Warin, the engraver, 1672.

<sup>2</sup> Reckoned without "augmentations."

<sup>3</sup> Both Charles and Claude Perrault were in receipt of salaries and pensions from the King, but their names are simply entered as "Sr. Perrault." In 1670 Perrault (Charles) is described as "un de nos (Colbert's) commi ayant le soin de la visite de tous les ouvrages ordonnez par S.M. en ses bastimens, et de tenir la main a ce-que tous les ordres par nous donnez soient executez ponctuellement et avec toute la diligence requise." Charles Perrault resigned his office of controller in 1682 on account of certain changes introduced by Colbert, and the latter's temper "si difficile et si chagrin qu'il n'y avoit plus moyens d'y suffire ni d'y resister" (Charles Perrault, "Mémoires," p. 132). His office was sold for about 66,000 francs, of which only 22,000 were handed back to Perrault, the balance being divided between Le Brun and Le Nôtre.

send Colbert every week a report of the flowers. He was to visit all the building works then going on at Versailles; and to report on them to Colbert, look to the windmills,<sup>1</sup> provide all necessary materials, and see that the mills were at work whenever there was a wind, see that the fountains were in good order, finish the aqueduct, and put a grille in it to prevent the carp escaping. The astonishing thing is that Colbert went into all these details himself, enumerating each item. For instance, the statue of Ceres was not to be gilt till the month of May. Lefebvre was to take up a foot and a half of loam round the basin of Bacchus and replace it with sand. He was also to lower the basin eight inches, and so on through some ninety items. The office of *contrôleur général* could have been no easy one under Colbert. One of the items begins, "Il faut travailler incessamment." The marvel is how Colbert, with the weight of France on his shoulders, could have found time for these infinite details.

III. The higher grade administrative establishment was completed by three *Trésoriers général des bâtiments*, each acting alternatively at a salary of 2,800 francs apiece. Each of the Treasurers had a clerk with a salary of 200 francs per annum, but this establishment was increased all round as the system developed.

The above three classes are classified together in the "Comptes" as *officiers des Bâtimens*. Immediately following them came the class of executive officials under the general title of *officiers, qui ont gages pour servir généralement dans toutes les maisons royales*. In the earlier years of the "Comptes" the classification is loose and irregular, but from 1669 this is the regular heading under which were included artists of all kinds employed in the royal buildings. At the head of the list in that year is Louis Le Vau *premier architecte de S. Majesté*<sup>2</sup> 6,000 francs, followed by Le Muet, *autre architecte*, and François Le Vau, each at 1,000 francs; Le Brun as director of painting in all the Royal houses receives 4,800 francs, and as director of Gobelins, 4,000 francs. Charles Errard, who is described as a painter, had a salary of 1,200 francs. Félibien, *historiographe des bâtimens du Roy*,<sup>3</sup> the same, and Charles Perrault, 1,500 francs. The list contains some seventy odd names, among them Loyer and Coypel, painters, Lerambert, Guerin, Girardon,

<sup>1</sup> For pumping up water.

<sup>2</sup> In 1699, the post of "premier architecte de S. Majesté" was worth 10,000 francs, in addition to the retaining fee of 1,000 francs per annum as ordinary "architecte du Roi." See "Comptes," iv, 570.

<sup>3</sup> Félibien was also Secretary to the Academy of Architecture.



Regnauldin,<sup>1</sup> and Marsy, sculptors, Israel Silvestre, the engraver, Claude Mollet and André le Nôtre, designers of gardens, and Francini, the hydraulic engineer.<sup>2</sup> It also includes masons, carpenters, joiners, "ébénistes" (cabinet-makers), smiths, glaziers and plumbers, at uniform salaries of thirty francs a year. This salary appears to have been more of a retaining fee than payment for services rendered. The essential thing was the appointment as *maçon menuisier* or *ébéniste du Roi*. Special privileges attached to these offices. They were eagerly sought for, and when they were not fresh appointments or passed on from father to son, were conveyed by purchase. In 1691, when Villacerf succeeded Louvois as *Surintendant des Bâtiments*, Mansart was appointed to succeed Villacerf as Inspector General of Buildings at a salary of 10,000 francs, with permission to sell his office as *Directeur des Bâtiments*, and Dangeau estimated that Mansart would make over 100,000 francs by the sale.<sup>3</sup> The *officiers qui ont gages* must have formed a close and exclusive corporation, as oppressive in its way as the trade guilds in their degenerate days. Entrance to this magic circle could only be obtained by favour or purchase, and it was the only avenue to success in the arts. The architects, Mansart in particular, entrenched themselves solidly within its precincts, and reinforced themselves by relations distributed in other branches of the administration. Mansart was almost certainly related to Michael Hardouin, a large contractor for masonry in the Royal buildings, and to the Sr. Hardouin, *contrôleur général des Bastiments* who appears in 1684-7 as drawing a salary of 3,000 to 5,700 francs a year.<sup>4</sup> The Gabriel family is another well-known instance. What the architect designed his brother or his uncle contracted for, and some other relation checked the accounts, and it must have been almost impossible for an outsider to break into the ring fence of this early Office of Works. All the best known names appear in the list. Le Vau (Louis and François), D'Orbay, Gittard,

<sup>1</sup> No doubt a descendant of the Regnauldin, otherwise Naldini, the Italian in the employment of François I. See "History of French Architecture, 1494-1661," Blomfield i, 14-52, 109.

<sup>2</sup> The Francini, Pierre and François, were descendants of the Francini who came from Florence and settled in France at the end of the sixteenth century, M. Guiffrey says about 1590. Alexandre Francini, who published his "Livre d'architecture" folio in 1640, describes himself on the title-page as "Florentin ingénieur ordinaire du Roi." François Francini received the high salary of 10,050 francs per ann. as "Intendant de la conduite et mouvement des eaux et Fontaines de S. Majesté." See "Comptes," iii, 1201.

<sup>3</sup> "Journal du Marquis de Dangeau," iii, 372. Saint-Simon says that in 1708 the sum of 3,000,000 francs was offered for the succession to Mansart's post of *Surintendant*.

<sup>4</sup> "Comptes," ii, 491, 728.

Cottard and Bruant, and in the next generation, L'Assurance, Desgodetz, Boffrand, and De Cotte. The members of the Academy of Architecture, Blondel, Gittard, D'Orbay, Bruant, Le Pautre, Mignard and Mansart were, *ipso facto*, *architectes du Roy*, and also received small salaries independently as members of the Academy.

In addition to these architects and tradesmen who were generally, as one might say, on the staff, there were architects told off to special buildings.<sup>1</sup> In 1679 D'Orbay was in charge of Fontainebleau, Desgodetz, author of "Les Edifices Antiques de Rome," was "controller" of Chambord, Matthieu and Pinart *jeunes architectes* receive 1,200 francs apiece for their care of the park of S. Germain-en-Laye. This excellent practice of assigning Prix de Rome students to the charge, under higher direction, of important historical buildings, prevails in France to this day, and might well be introduced into this country.

It appears that buildings were not carried out by contracts, priced by quantities, based on drawings and specifications, as is usual nowadays, but by measure and value on an agreed schedule of prices. This schedule was fixed beforehand, the architect inspected the works during execution, and on completion the buildings were measured and priced by experts in accordance with the schedule<sup>2</sup> and if this work was satisfactory a "gratification" was granted to the contractor. When the measuring was completed the chief clerk of the *Surintendant* gave an order for payment to the acting *Tresorier des Bâtiments* who paid the money and took the contractor's receipt. There does not appear to have been any final certificate of completion by the architect. The whole affair was dealt with solely as a matter of accounts, and under Colbert's lynx-eyed scrutiny, the King seems to have been fairly well served.

From 1664 to 1680 Charles Perrault issued the orders for payment. These were usually formal documents, but M. Guiffrey gives one of 1674 of more human interest.<sup>3</sup> "M. de la Manche will please raise

<sup>1</sup> The "Comptes" also include a class of officers, "servans Sa Majesté pour l'entretenement des maisons et châteaux cy-apres nommez," viz.: Louvre, Cours de la Reyne, Palais Royal, College de France, Château de Madrid, S. Germain-en-Laye, Saint Leger, Pougues, Versailles, Jardin Medicinal, Hôtel des Ambassadeurs, Château Thierry, Villers Cotterets (1685). Most of these officers were concierges at small salaries.

<sup>2</sup> Entries of payments to these "experts" occur in the "Comptes"; in 1688 a certain Goujon "employé a toiser les ouvrages" receives a salary of 3,600 francs a year. A Jean Perrault also appears in 1680, and other years, as an "expert des Bastimens" measuring at Versailles, together with "St. Perrault, Père." I do not know what relations these were to Charles and Claude Perrault. Jean appears again in 1695.

<sup>3</sup> "Comptes," Int., vol. i, p. xxi.



no difficulty about paying the Sr. Benoist the 368 francs awarded him and the Sr. Colin, although the said Colin has not signed the receipt, because this Colin is a rogue who has run away and committed a theft, who deserves hanging, and in consequence will not appear. I am his humble and obedient servant, this 28 January 1674, C. Perrault."

In regard to materials, in some cases the contractor provided them, in others they were found by the King. In either case Colbert took good care to make a very good bargain. In 1678 the price agreed for S. Cloud stone for the Arc de Triomphe, delivered on the site, was 40 sous the foot super for stone not exceeding 14 feet super and 20 inches thick. Allowing for the 20 inches in thickness this works out at one shilling a foot cube.<sup>1</sup> For larger stones the price increased according to the size of the stone quarried, and was, of course, very much higher for the enormous coping stones of the pediment of the Louvre. The King usually paid something under the market prices. For example, a contract was made in 1684 for the glass for the Royal houses. In this a considerable reduction was made on trade prices. The trade price for glass 14 inches square was 3 francs 8 sous, the *prix du Roi* was 2 francs 8 sous; the trade price for glass measuring 44 to 45 inches was 470 francs;<sup>2</sup> the King got it for 352 francs the piece. On the other hand, the materials were often supplied out of the Royal stores at an agreed price. Each important Royal building seems to have had its own store. In 1688 Claude Cosset drew "un milier de plomb" from the store of S. Germain at 2 sous 6 deniers the pound.<sup>3</sup> In 1689 Thomas Vallerand, smith, pays 215 francs 11 sous 7 deniers for 3,593 pounds of old iron at 6 francs the 100 pounds weight, and 254 francs 17 sous 6 deniers for 4,248 pounds of old iron from the store at Versailles. Pierre le Maistre, contractor, in 1689 pays 526,729 francs 15 sous for materials supplied him for the aqueduct at Maintenon,<sup>4</sup> and in the same account is an entry of 4,829 francs 6 sous 11 deniers paid by Baptiste

<sup>1</sup> The price of Portland stone was 9s. 3d. a foot cube, and of Bath stone 5s. 4d. a foot cube before the war. It is now (1919-20) 24s. and 10s. 8d.

<sup>2</sup> The high price of glass is notable. Large sums were paid to glaziers, and in 1665 4,657 francs 10 sous was provided for workmen imported from Venice to establish a manufacture of Venetian glass in France ("Comptes," i, 63). In 1672 Claude Briot, "miroitier," receives 900 francs. Hervé de Guymont, "commis de la manufacture des glases," 9,930 francs, and the directors of the Factory 13,389 francs for various glasses, a total of 24,219. There are constant entries in the "Comptes" of payments both for window-glass and for mirrors, a form of decoration coming into fashion at the end of the seventeenth century.

<sup>3</sup> "Comptes," iii, 151.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, 239.

Tuby, Antoine "Coisvaux," and Estienne le Hongre for 379 feet 4 inches 4 lines  $\frac{1}{3}$  cubes of Italian marble, white, veined white, "portor," and grey brèche from Sauveterre, supplied from store for the tomb of Cardinal Mazarin in the Collège des Quatre Nations. In 1690 Pollard pays 24,700 francs for 1,235 fathoms of 8 in. cast-iron pipes drawn from the store of Versailles at 20 francs the fathom. Similar entries continually occur in the "Comptes," and afford invaluable material for a history of prices. The price of an 8 in. cast-iron pipe in 1913 was 10s. 6d. a yard, now 30s. 6d. It is, however, by no means easy to arrive at any standard value for the franc of Louis XIV. Glass and iron were relatively rare in those days, and lead had to be brought from England. Stone, on the other hand, which could be obtained in abundance and of excellent quality, seems to have been incredibly cheap.

The conditions of labour for the workmen on the Royal buildings were less harsh than might have been supposed. Louis XIV was naturally humane. As for Colbert, although he liked to fancy himself a "grand seigneur," he was himself a man of the people. In his heart of hearts he had a profound contempt for the aristocracy, and was too great a statesman to treat the wellbeing of the lower classes as beneath his notice. For example, in 1684, Fenel, a contractor, is paid for the beds and mattresses of his workmen,<sup>1</sup> and in March of that year a contract was made with him and his partner, Loistron, to furnish the workmen at Versailles, who lodged in quarters built for them by the King, with good household bread at 15 deniers ( $1\frac{1}{4}$ d.) the pound; good "vin commun" at 4 sous the pint, "eau de vie" at 12 sous the pint, and for a porringer full of soup 6 deniers.<sup>2</sup> Accidents were of constant occurrence in all these buildings, and particularly at Versailles, where the King was so impatient that the work was carried on night and day. Colbert, writing in 1670, says there was a double shift of carpenters, one for the day, one for the night. If there were not enough workmen, troops were employed without the least hesitation, and with little regard to casualties. Nobody ever knew how many soldiers were killed or died of malaria during the building of the aqueduct of Maintenon. There was, however, some sort of system of workmen's compensation. For example, in 1685 a workman who had injured his right hand in one of the aqueducts receives 22 francs.<sup>3</sup> François Durant is paid in February 35 francs in consideration of his leg having been broken when working on the

<sup>1</sup> "Comptes," ii, 465.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i, xx. The denier was  $\frac{1}{12}$ th of the sou, and the sou  $\frac{1}{20}$ th of the livre.

<sup>3</sup> See *ibid.*, ii, 733-740.



aqueduct of La Boissière. Seven soldiers of the regiment of Greder, wounded on the same aqueduct, received 178 francs. This account contains the names of over ninety workmen or soldiers who were killed or wounded on various works, principally the aqueducts. Eight of them had been killed outright, and in six of these cases compensation was paid to the widows. The amounts paid vary from 15 francs for slight injuries and 20 francs to a soldier who fell off the scaffolding of the orangery at Versailles, up to 100 francs to the widow of a workman killed in working on the Chailly road. The lowest entry is that of 12 francs to the widow Boudain for the loss of her "beste asine qui a esté abismée dans les travaux de Marly." Marly seems to have been fatal to donkeys, for in the same account Barbe Cornet receives 11 francs for his *bourrique*, which had been killed "en travaillant aux ouvrages de Marly." The work on the aqueducts appears to have been the most dangerous. The workmen tumbled down wells and broke their legs and thighs, or got buried in landslips, or fell off the aqueducts. Seven workmen injured on the Hôtel Vendôme are mentioned in the list of compensations for 1686, but by far the greater number of accidents, often fatal, occurred in the various waterworks with their ponderous and complicated machinery, more particularly the machine de Marly. In 1690 the list of casualties is greatly diminished. The want of money was making itself felt; building operations were slackening, and it is probable that claims for compensation were no longer acknowledged with the liberality of earlier years. In 1692 Mansart drew his 10,000 francs as usual, but only one workman receives compensation; in 1695 not a single workman is mentioned as receiving compensation for injuries.

Of all the works undertaken by Louis XIV the aqueduct of Maintenon was the most disastrous. The great difficulty at Versailles, Marly, and Clagny was the water supply. Their fountains and cascades, constructed at enormous cost, had to be fed, and when the King set his heart on the infatuated enterprise of Versailles, he overlooked, among many other disadvantages, the fact that there was no water worth considering. The machine of Marly,<sup>1</sup> constructed near S. Germain to pump up the water of the Seine, and considered one of the wonders of the time, proved a failure, and as an heroic remedy it was decided to

<sup>1</sup> The machine of Marly was begun in 1682, and appears to have been more or less completed by 1689, when there is a drop in the annual expenditure of about 100,000 francs, but every year down to 1715 money was being spent on it, after 1689 at the rate of about 50,000 francs a year. The total expenditure on the machine from 1682 to 1715 was 4,611,898 francs. The machine was fully illustrated in contemporary engravings.

convey the waters of the Eure to Versailles by an aqueduct, a distance of some 45 kilometres as the crow flies. The work was begun in 1685 and carried on for ten years, when it was abandoned. It had cost 8,944,379 francs, and the lives of innumerable workmen and soldiers employed in its construction, and its gigantic ruins stand to this day in the valley of Maintenon, a sinister monument of the folly and selfishness of Louis XIV and his Ministers. Saint-Simon says: "Il n'en este resté que d'informes monuments qui éterniseront cette cruelle folie." So many men were lost here, not only through accidents but through malaria, that it was forbidden under severe penalties to mention the subject. "Combien d'autres furent des années à se rétablir de cette contagion, combien n'en ont put reprendre leur santé pendant le reste de leur vie." Even Colonels, Brigadiers, and General officers were not allowed to absent themselves from the work for a quarter of an hour. Saint-Simon says that the war stopped the work in 1688, but the evidence of the "Comptes" shows he was wrong as to this. It was not given up as hopeless till 1695.<sup>1</sup> Colbert died in 1683, and the loss of his clear head and strong restraining hand is shown in the outburst of extravagant building under Louvois and the gradual decline of the Monarchy which followed it.

Colbert's organization had its faults—there were too many overlapping offices, too much opportunity for jobbery and nepotism, too many lay officials interfering with affairs which required expert knowledge. It tended also to an enormous multiplication of minor offices, but this has always been a favourite weakness of the French. "Des le XIII siècle France pullulait d'une effrénée multitude d'offices."<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, it was the first systematic attempt to introduce order and method into the building operations of the Crown. Colbert, a statesman who thought out his ideas as a whole, and had no need to follow the methods of the party politician, dealt with his organization as a part of his splendid scheme for the rehabilitation of France. The Academies in Paris, the Academy in Rome, the State control of the Gobelins, the Beauvais, and the Maison de la Savonnerie, the hierarchy of architects, painters, and sculptors "du Roi," all had for their ultimate object the glory of the King; but whatever Louis XIV may have thought about it, it was the King as the representative of France, and it was at the development and ennoblement of France that Colbert

<sup>1</sup> See note at the end of this chapter on the "aqueduct of Maintenon."

<sup>2</sup> Lavissee, vii, 368.



was aiming through the King. The inferior men who succeeded him lost sight of this vital fact. Where Colbert had thought first of France, their first thought was their personal preservation of the Royal favour, and the least satisfactory chapter in the history of French architecture of the time of Louis XIV is the perpetual undercurrent of intrigue at the Court, of which the most signal instance was the extraordinary success of Jules Hardouin Mansart.

#### NOTE ON THE AQUEDUCT OF MAINTENON

In the autumn of 1684 Philippe de la Hire surveyed the levels, and in January 1685 Louvois consulted the Academy of Architecture as to the materials, foundations, and construction of the aqueduct of Maintenon. The original design provided for brick piers 209 feet high, and 24 feet by 48 on plan carrying semicircular arches, and Louvois' engineers proposed to fill up the interior of these piers with flints. The Academy showed considerable courage. They told Louvois bluntly that they did not think his piers would stand, that they would almost certainly settle unequally, and that his proposed construction was unsound. Louvois, annoyed at their frankness, dismissed the Academy, "nous commandant de nous humanizer," but the Academy stoutly expressed their desire to say what they thought according to their conscience and the glory of the King, and stuck to their opinion. They recommended that the piers should be stayed by deep connecting arches at two levels below the top arcade carrying the actual aqueduct, that side buttresses should be added, and that the brickwork should be reinforced by courses of stone and tapered upwards, not less than  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in 6 feet, instead of being built plumb. They also suggested that either the footings should be continuous, or that inverted arches should be formed underground from pier to pier. Louvois, obstinate and arrogant, reluctantly gave way; three fresh designs were submitted to the Academy, who selected one, but insisted on its being altered to their original proposals. The work was begun to this design, but only the lowest of the three stages was completed. The specification issued in 1685 gives the total intended height as 216' 6", the lowest stage 70' 0" high, an intermediate stage, 15' 6", and a third stage, 70' 0". I presume the plinths and spaces above the extrados of the arches and the aqueduct itself made up the rest of the height. The total length was specified to be about  $9\frac{2}{3}$  miles (8,482 toises), with a fall of 12. 0. See "Procès-Verbaux," vol. ii, Introd., xxxiv-xliii, and pp. 70-75, 76-78, 84-90.

## CHAPTER V

### LOUIS LE VAU, FRANÇOIS D'ORBAY, RICHER, LAMBERT, AND THE LAST OF THE OLD REGIME

M. LEMONNIER<sup>1</sup> has divided the reign of Louis XIV into two main periods, the period from 1661 to 1690, the age of Molière, Racine, Boileau, Bossuet and La Fontaine, of Claude and Charles Perrault, J. H. Mansart, Girardon, Puget Coysevox, Le Brun and Mignard; and the second period from 1690 to 1715, the age of Saint-Simon and Fénelon, Nicholas Coustou, Jouvenet Coppel and Robert de Cotte. As a general classification this is sound enough, though dates overlap. The great building activities stopped in 1689. Owing to political causes the King and his Ministers simply could not find the money, but Colbert, to whom the age of Louis XIV owed all that was most vital, died in 1683, and J. H. Mansart did not become *Surintendant* till 1699 and died in 1708. Moreover, there was an earlier transition stage from the architecture of the time of Mazarin to that of Colbert, which ended with the death of Le Vau in 1670, and the foundation of the Academy of Architecture in the year following. Le Vau belonged quite as much to the age of Mazarin as to that of Colbert, and of this transition period he is the typical representative.

Louis Le Vau was born in 1612, and, according to Bauchal, was the son of a Surveyor of Roads and Inspector-General of the King's buildings at Fontainebleau. Nothing is known of his early training. According to M. Sellier<sup>2</sup> he was the architect of the Hôtel d'Aumont (No. 7 Rue de Jouy, Paris) for Michael Antoine Scarron. In 1649 Scarron had this house rebuilt at a cost of 30,000 livre Tournois; and according to M. Sellier he paid Louis Le Vau, "architecte du Roi," 204 livres for his designs. Sauval<sup>3</sup> said, "Cette maison est un bijou où

<sup>1</sup> "L'Art Français au temps de Louis XIV," Henry Lemonnier, 1911, chap. i.

<sup>2</sup> "Anciens Hôtels de Paris," Sellier, pp. 196-7.

<sup>3</sup> "Antiquités de Paris," ii, 157.



l'on admire un salon à l'Italienne conduit par Le Vau enriché de figures et ornemens de stuc par Van Opstal et peint par Vouet." But on the last of the four plates of this house in "Le Petit Marot" it is described as "du dessein de l'architecte Mansart." It is entirely in the manner of the elder Mansart, and for reasons given elsewhere I am convinced it was designed by him and not by Le Vau.<sup>1</sup> The first certain work by Le Vau was the important Hôtel Lambert, on the Isle S. Louis, about the middle of the seventeenth century. In 1614 Louis XIII bought the Isle au Vâches, at the eastern end of the Isle S. Louis, from the Dean and Chapter of Nôtre Dame, and ordered Christophe Marie<sup>2</sup> to draw up a scheme for the development of the vacant ground. He filled up the space between the two islands and built the Pont Marie. These preliminary works were not completed till 1647, and the Hôtel Lambert was probably built very soon afterwards, for Claude Lambert de Thorigny, "Président à la Chambre de Comptes." The Hôtel Lambert is a heavy, gloomy-looking building outside.<sup>3</sup> The principal merit was the interior, lavishly decorated by Le Sueur, who painted the Birth of Love on the ceiling of the great Cabinet, and Le Brun, who painted the Labours of Hercules on the ceiling of the gallery.<sup>4</sup> Sauval,<sup>5</sup> who greatly admired the house, says "Cette maison a un air de grandeur et de sagesse qui se distingue de fort loin," and that Louis Le Vau never designed a more beautiful building than this. Blondel<sup>6</sup> says the exterior is treated "d'un goût mâle, simple et noble." Blondel was so exasperated with the fripperies of the fashionable designers of his time that he forgave a good deal if the architecture was simple and straightforward, but he does not hesitate to point out certain serious faults in the design of the Hôtel Lambert, such as that of breaking the architrave of the first and second floor entablatures to allow full height to the architraves of the windows. This, he says, is one of those "licences qu'il faut éviter absolument dans l'ordonnance d'une architecture

<sup>1</sup> See "Hist. of French Architecture, 1494-1661," Blomfield, ii, 124.

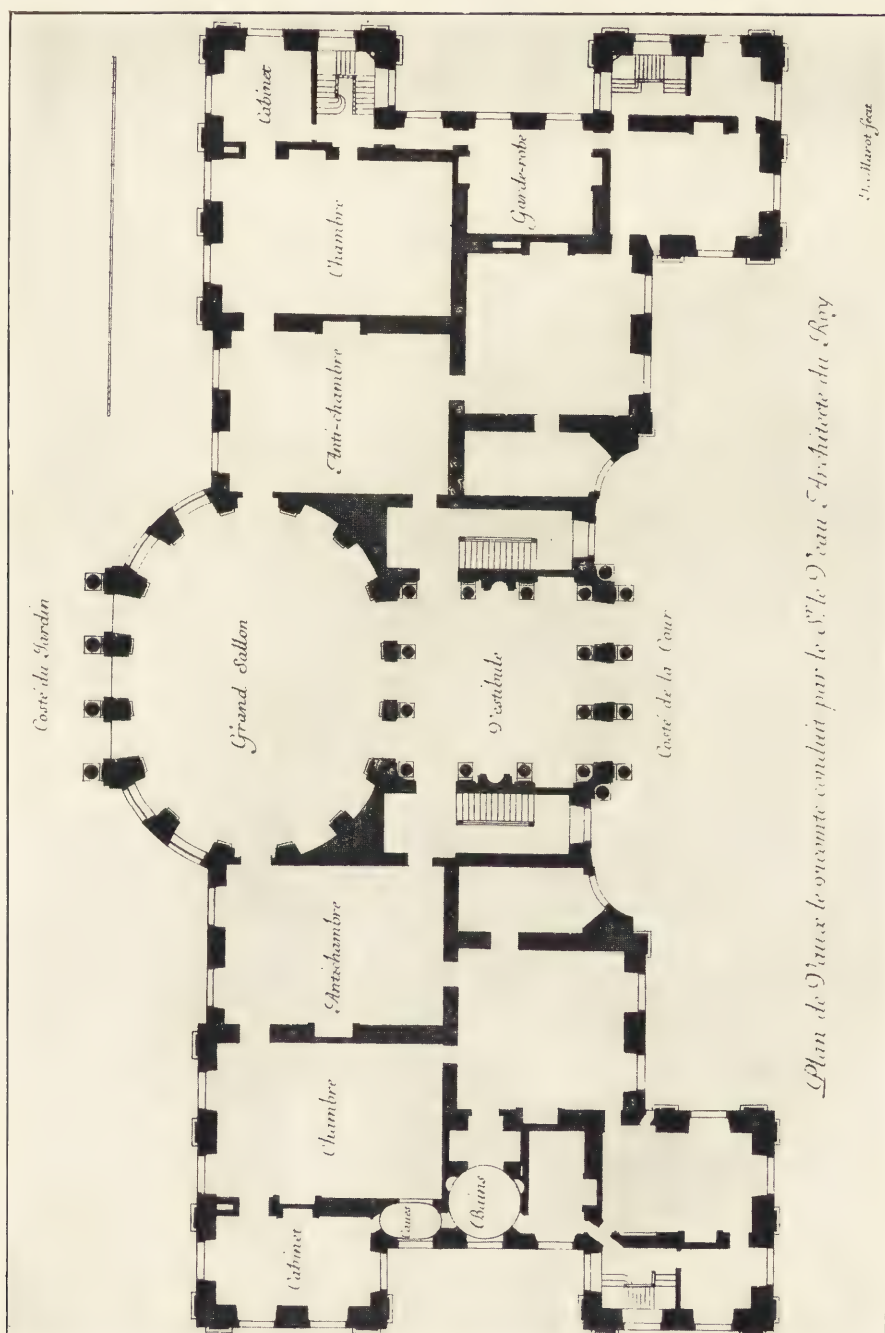
<sup>2</sup> Entrepreneur général des ponts de France.

<sup>3</sup> There was another Hôtel de Lambert in the Rue de L'Université, designed by Dullin, 1730 (Blondel, "Arch. Franc.," vol. i, p. xxii). Le Vau's building is called by Blondel, "Maison de Le President Lambert" (vol. ii, *ibid.*). The façades were restored by Viollet-le-Duc and Lassus, after being used as a warehouse for soldiers' beds, so that it is difficult to judge of it fairly. The Hotel, which belongs to the Czartoryski family, is not shown.

<sup>4</sup> 68 feet long by 15 feet wide, by 17 feet 2 inches high (Blondel).

<sup>5</sup> "Antiquités," ii, 222-224. For a detailed account of this house, see "L'Hôtel Lambert," Robert Henard et A. Fauchier-Maignan.

<sup>6</sup> "Arch. Franc.," ii, chap. vii.



VAUX LE VICOMTE.—GROUND PLAN, LE VAU (see p. 57)





*Vue du Chateau de Vaux le Vicomte du cote de l'Entrée.  
A Paris chez L. Marotte. Rue St Jacques a la Vierge et aux Colonnes d'Arcueil. Fait par Perelle*

[Perelle

VAUX LE VICOMTE. BY L. LE VAU (see p. 57)



*LA MAISON DE VAUX LE VICOMTE, appartenant à Monsieur Fouquet du temps de sa surintendance, le sieur le Vau, en fut l'architecte, elle fut commencée en 1657, et a été mise dans la perfection où elle est avec une promptitude et une dépense extraordinaires. Elle appartient présentement à Madame Fumet.  
A PARIS chez L. Marotte. rue St Jacques a la Vierge et aux Colonnes d'Arcueil.  
Fait par Perelle*

[Perelle

VAUX LE VICOMTE—GARDEN FRONT. LE VAU AND LE NÔTRE (see p. 58)



d'ailleurs grave et régulière." His view was that Le Vau was an able and original artist, who to some extent made good his variations on the orthodox tradition, but it would require a great deal of originality to justify the unpleasant pedestals of the lower order in the Court, or the very clumsy handling of the upper order. On the exterior Le Vau adopted the entirely different motive of the colossal order with Ionic pilasters, 3 feet 2 inches in diameter, running through two storeys. In neither case are the proportions happy, the absence of a delicate sense of scale and proportion which disfigured all Le Vau's designs is apparent in this, his first authentic work. The plan is commonplace and inconvenient,<sup>1</sup> and it is difficult to understand the admiration with which this building appears to have been regarded from the first. The details of the "Hôtel Salé dit de Juigné" in the Rue de Thorigny, though rather heavy and out of scale, are more attractive than those of the Hôtel de Lambert. Le Vau was a good deal happier with his country houses. About the middle of the seventeenth century Fouquet bought the Viscounty of Melun and called in Le Vau in 1653<sup>2</sup> to design him his great house of Vaux le Vicomte, some six kilometres north-east of Melun. The last great country house, Maisons, begun in 1642, had only just been completed for René de Longueil, and Fouquet, with the immense resources of the State finances behind him, was determined to outdo the effort of a mere Président à Mortier. He was said to have spent 18 million livres on Vaux le Vicomte, though there is probably no better foundation for the story than for the legends of the cost of Versailles. Vaux le Vicomte is a curious building, with fine points, but unsatisfactory as a whole. The house, as designed by Le Vau, was surrounded by a moat with retaining walls and balustrades, and the entrance was by a bridge crossing the moat leading to the forecourt, on three sides of which was a low terrace.<sup>3</sup> The façade of the house on the farther side of the Court is symmetrical, with advanced pavilions on each side, the steep roofs of which break awkwardly on to the mansard roofs behind them.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Rummler's "Le Style Louis XIV," pl. 58-63.

<sup>2</sup> Date in Perelle's view of the garden front; not 1656, as generally stated.

<sup>3</sup> The existing grille with the six terminal figures are not part of the original design. See Perelle's view.

<sup>4</sup> In justice to Le Vau, however, it should be pointed out that in Marot's elevations the roof of the dome is kept quite separate from the adjoining roofs on both elevations, the mansard roofs on either side of it are carried through the wings, and the Doric entablature at first floor level is carried right round the building, stopping against the Corinthian pilasters of the pavilion. Marot's elevation shows a better design than that actually carried out, and it is probable that this was spoilt in execution through the interference of Fouquet and his amateur friends.



Not content with this break, Le Vau dropped his roof in the centre block, coming forward again over the entrance with a central pavilion, behind which appears the lantern over the domed roof of the salon. The whole thing is overdone. There are too many breaks and returns and changes of motive. The balustrade above the curves on either side of the entrance portico has no relation to the Doric entablature on the adjoining wings. The balustrade of the wings is not carried through to the centre pavilion, and the latter suddenly jumps up to a higher level without regard to the rest of the design.<sup>1</sup> The end pavilions with Ionic pilasters running through two strings have the fatal defect of being in two bays instead of three, with the result that a pilaster runs up the centre of the façade, and the garden front is clumsy, the great circular salon projects partially beyond the main front, and the intersection of the dome with the mansard roof is ugly and out of keeping with the steep-pitched roofs of the pavilions. The most satisfactory parts of the design are the angle pavilions on the garden front, an anticipation of his design for the Collège des Quatre Nations, but here again the colossal order strikes a different note from the fussy order above order of the centre portico. Vaux le Vicomte is a good example of the difference between an architect with a real sense of architecture and the mere technician who is replete with details, but has not the power to combine them in one organic composition. Le Vau had a magnificent opportunity for a great original design, and all he could do was to string together other people's ideas. There is no harm in borrowing if the designer is man enough to assimilate the motive and make it so entirely his own that it acquires a new significance, but this is just what Le Vau seems to have been unable to do. His designs are full of *disjecta membra poetæ*, as it were, and it is this that makes them so disappointing, leaving one always with a sense of something wanting. Lemercier's domical roof and cupola on the garden front of Richelieu was more satisfactory than Le Vau's circular dome at Vaux. Vaux, like Richelieu and Maisons, was placed on a *fausse-braye* surrounded by a moat, but the approach to Richelieu must have been far the finer of the two. The curves returning from the wings to the central entrance are reminiscences of Mansart's work at Blois, the colossal order of the younger Du Cerceau's pavilions at the Louvre, and the central portico on the garden front of the less happy efforts of De L'Orme. Le Vau missed the

<sup>1</sup> The huge figures above the pediment of the Central Portico are quite out of scale, but appear to be later, as they are not shown in Perelle's view; nor does this view show the breaks on the roof referred to in the text.

picturesque quality of the older manner and failed to catch the dignity and restraint of the new. Fouquet, however, and the taste of the time were entirely satisfied. Le Brun decorated the interior, and Le Nôtre made one of his tremendous designs for the grounds. The gardens and the Grotto of Vaux, with its water-piece and fountains, its ramps and its canal, 1,000 yards long by 40 yards wide, are a fine example of Le Nôtre in his earlier manner.<sup>1</sup>

Le Vau was now the leading architect in France. François Mansart, an incomparably better artist, was too independent and had fallen out of fashion in his old age. Le Pautre, his only serious rival, was never quite successful, and the younger men had not yet arrived. Le Vau was already in the King's service, having succeeded Lemercier as "architecte du Roi" on the death of the latter in 1654. In 1656 he receives 3,000 livres<sup>2</sup> as wages, his brother Francis receiving 500, and when the "Comptes" opened in 1664 he appears as "Premier architecte du Roi" with a salary of 6,000 livres a year, and in the entry of his death in the registers of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois he is described as "Conseiller du Roi en ses Conseils, Surintendant et Ordonnateur General des Bâtiments de S.M.; Premier Architecte de ses Bâtiments, Secrétaire de S.M. Maison, Couronne de France et de ses Finances."<sup>3</sup> In 1656 he was employed by Mazarin to make some extensive additions to the castle of Vincennes. The old building consisted of a court enclosing the Donjon and the chapel with walls "entrecoupées de neuf vieilles tours quarrées qui font un fort bel effect a la vue. Le Nouveau est bordé de deux aisles enrichies de pilastres and terminées d'une balustrade." Sauval, writing before the enlargement of Versailles, says that Louis XIV had made Vincennes one of the most *logeables* and superb of all the Royal palaces.<sup>4</sup> The fine view by Perelle shows Le Vau's work, which consisted of the entrance and the two wings on either side of the entrance court, joining up the old towers at the angles. The entrance archway of the Doric order is described in Perelle's plate as "un morceau très superbe et d'un bon goust d'architecture . . . embelli de quantité de statues antiques."<sup>5</sup> There was no question in

<sup>1</sup> This design is further dealt with in my account of Le Nôtre, chap. xii. Vaux le Vicomte was magnificently furnished. It had some 138 tapestries woven with gold, eight of them from the Mortlake looms, superb Persian and Chinese carpets, velvet and silver brocades, and immense quantities of gold and silver plate.

<sup>2</sup> "Nouvelles archives de l'art Franç.," 1872, i, 37.

<sup>3</sup> Herluison, "Actes d'Etat-civil."

<sup>4</sup> Sauval, "Antiquités," ii, 305.

<sup>5</sup> Germain Brice, "Description de Paris," 8th edit., says that this archway was considered one of the finest pieces of architecture in the realm.



Le Vau's day of "restoration." Where they did not destroy them outright the architects just left the old buildings as they were, and tacked on the new in the manner of the time.

Meanwhile Le Vau was busily employed by wealthy state officials in the design of large country houses within easy reach of Paris. With the exception of Vaux le Vicomte, nearly all of these have since been destroyed, most unfortunately for Le Vau's reputation, because so far as it is possible to judge from the engravings of Marot and Perelle, Vaux le Vicomte was by no means the happiest of his designs. Probably, soon after Vaux le Vicomte, Le Vau designed the Château de Rincy, two or three leagues from Paris, for Bordier, Intendant des Finances. The great salon occupied the centre of the garden front as usual. On the forecourt side arcades ran out to the advanced pavilions, a favourite variation with Le Vau, and judging from Perelle's engraving Rincy must have been a finer design than Vaux, and almost as complete in its grounds and gardens. In the "Petit Marot" seven plates are devoted to the plans, sections, and elevations of Rincy.<sup>1</sup> I can find no further information as to Rincy or the house that Le Vau designed for M. Henselin at Saint Sepolcre, near Troyes. Marot gives seven plates of this latter building. The plan shows a forecourt in front of the house with pavilions at the external angles connected with the house by two long galleries about 90 feet by 15 feet, a broad flight of steps from the forecourt led to an open vestibule, beyond which was the salon, 40 feet by 26 feet; to the right and left of the salon Le Vau placed the principal rooms *en suite* with one main staircase and two subordinate stairs. For M. Henselin Le Vau also designed a town house in the Isle Notre Dame<sup>2</sup> in Paris, on a rather unusual plan. The site was too narrow to complete the whole of the design seen from the back, so Le Vau availed himself of the adjoining site to provide a symmetrical façade on the returns to the court, an early instance of a practice that became common in the eighteenth century.

The Château de Turny in Burgundy, if by Le Vau, must have been a fine house. Marot illustrates it in six plates, and the plan with salon and the vestibule in the centre, the huge cupola, and certain details of the design, are characteristic of Le Vau. Unfortunately Marot omitted the name of the architect, but this may have been a mature

<sup>1</sup> Marot's scale is in toises (fathoms). The entrance hall, 60 feet by 37 feet, with its columns and its double flight of stairs leading out of it, suggested interesting possibilities in the design.

<sup>2</sup> No. 24, Quai de Bethune.





**LE CHATEAU DE VINCENNES** à une lieue de Paris fut commencé par Philippe Auguste, continué par Philippe de Valois, conduit jusques au troisième étage par le Roi Jean, et enfin achevé aussi bien que la Chapelle par Charles V. Il a été le séjour de plusieurs Rois de la 3<sup>e</sup> Race. Le Cardinal Mazarin a fait changer l'ancien Bâtimement, dont il ne reste que les huit Tours et le Donjon qui sert pour les prisonniers de qualité. Les Appartemens du Roi occupent les deux ailes. Le S<sup>r</sup> Le Vau a été l'Architecte de cette Façade qui regarde le Parc, qui est une promenade agreable.

*A Paris chez N. Langlois rue St. Jacques à la Victoire. Avec Privilège du Roi.*

[Perelle

VINCENNES AS ENLARGED BY LE VAU (see p. 59)



**LE CHATEAU DE RINCY** à deux lieues de Paris, a été bâti par M<sup>r</sup> Bordier Intendant des Finances, sur les dessein de S<sup>r</sup> Le Vau. Le Salon est remarquable par sa grandeur et par les peintures de M<sup>r</sup> Le Brun qui en font le principal ornement. Madame de Pompadour avoit acquis cette Maison qui appartient aujourd'hui à

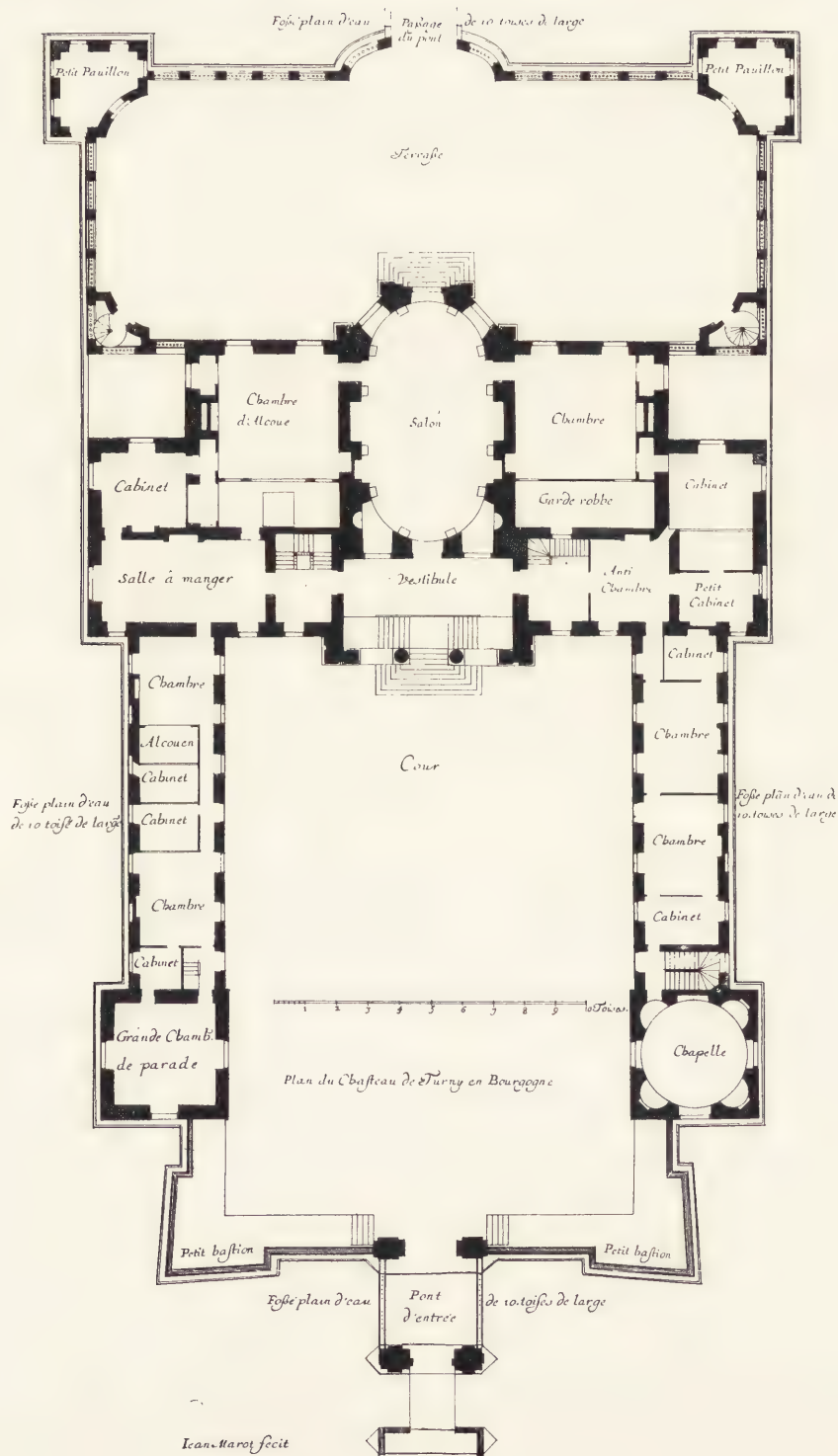
*A Paris chez N. Langlois rue St. Jacques à la Victoire. Avec Privilège du Roi.*

[Perelle

RINCY. DESIGNED BY LE VAU (p. 60)

[I. TO FACE P. 60

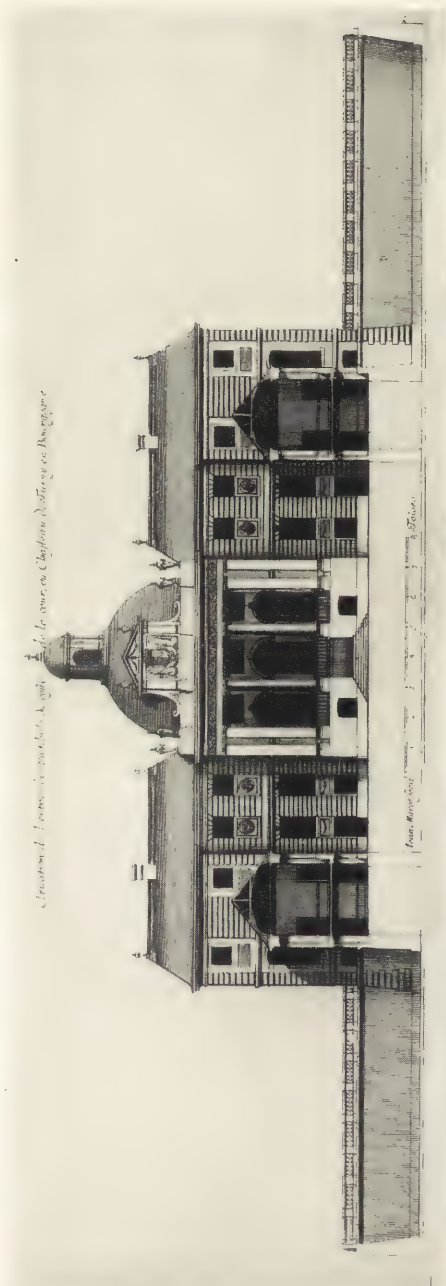




PLAN OF THE CHÂTEAU DE TURNY, PROBABLY BY LE VAU (see p. 60)



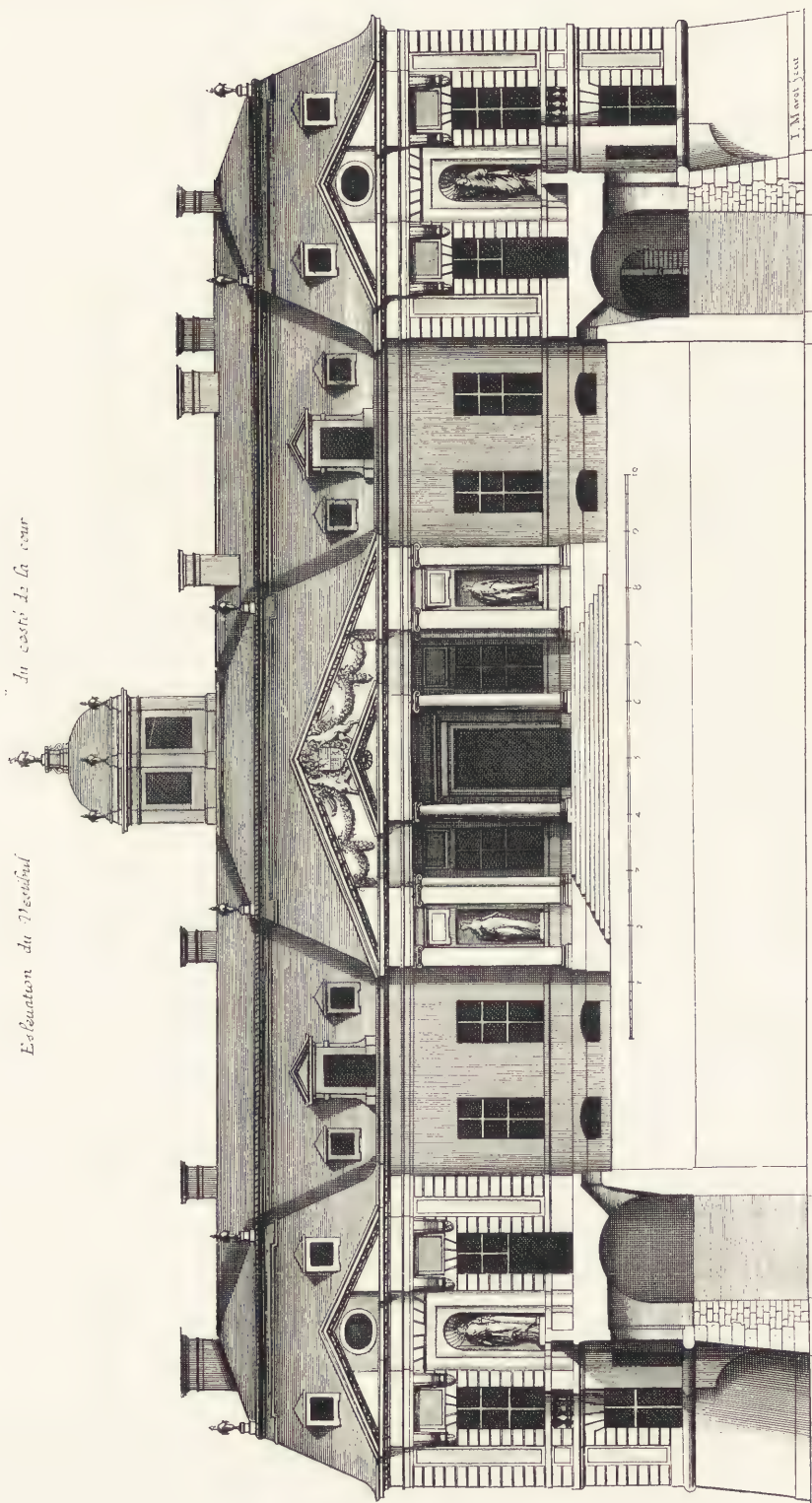
BACK ELEVATION



[J. Marot

FRONT ELEVATION AND SECTION THROUGH COURT  
CHÂTEAU DE TURNY (see p. 60)





S. SEPOLCRE NEAR TROVES—SECTION THROUGH FORECOURT AND ELEVATION. LE VAU (see p. 60)

work of Le Vau, designed after 1660. He was fond of these great ungainly pavilions, enclosing either a central salon or a staircase. He added one to the old château of Meudon, enclosing a central staircase, probably for Colbert, soon after 1661;<sup>1</sup> and about that date he appears to have also designed for Colbert a large plain house in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs in which he dispensed with the orders, using plain rusticated arcades and panels in the upper storey in the manner of Le Muet. Marot gives also a bird's-eye view of a house built from the designs of Le Vau for the President Tambonneau in the Faubourg S. Germain. Here he used orders above orders for the central frontispiece to the Court, and one would hardly think the two designs were by the same man. Le Vau had a typical plan for his country houses, with their central pavilion dominating and often overpowering the whole design, but apart from this his architecture shows no strong individuality. He often seems to have been uncertain what to do next. He did not possess the happy instinct that jumps to the right thing, and his technique was not adequate to supplying his want of invention. Colbert's establishment of his Academy of Architecture in Paris and the French Academy at Rome met a very real need. The architects of genius, such as François Mansart, and in a less degree Lemercier, could stand by themselves—it was time that the systematic study of the theory of architecture as an art was taken up by a recognized authority. Twenty years later the mistakes in technique made by Le Vau would have been impossible to men by no means his superiors in ability. His design for the Hôtel de Lyonne<sup>2</sup> in Paris is more satisfactory, though here again as at Vaux he used orders above orders in one part of the building and the colossal order in another. He seems to have been a man of doubtful taste without very definite convictions or steady ideals.

Le Vau had been engaged since 1656<sup>3</sup> in large additions and alterations to the Louvre. At the Louvre he pulled down what had been built by Lescot on the river side, including the Pavillon du Roi, one of the most remarkable examples of internal decoration that existed in France, and on the site he built the façade to the river now concealed behind Perrault's front. His design consisted of a large central pavilion, surmounted by a square dome; at each end were lofty pavilions with pediments above the attic running back into steep-pitched roofs, and three storey buildings between, with balustrade and

<sup>1</sup> Shown in the engraving by Perelle.

<sup>2</sup> Plan and two views by Marot.

<sup>3</sup> Blondel says since 1653.

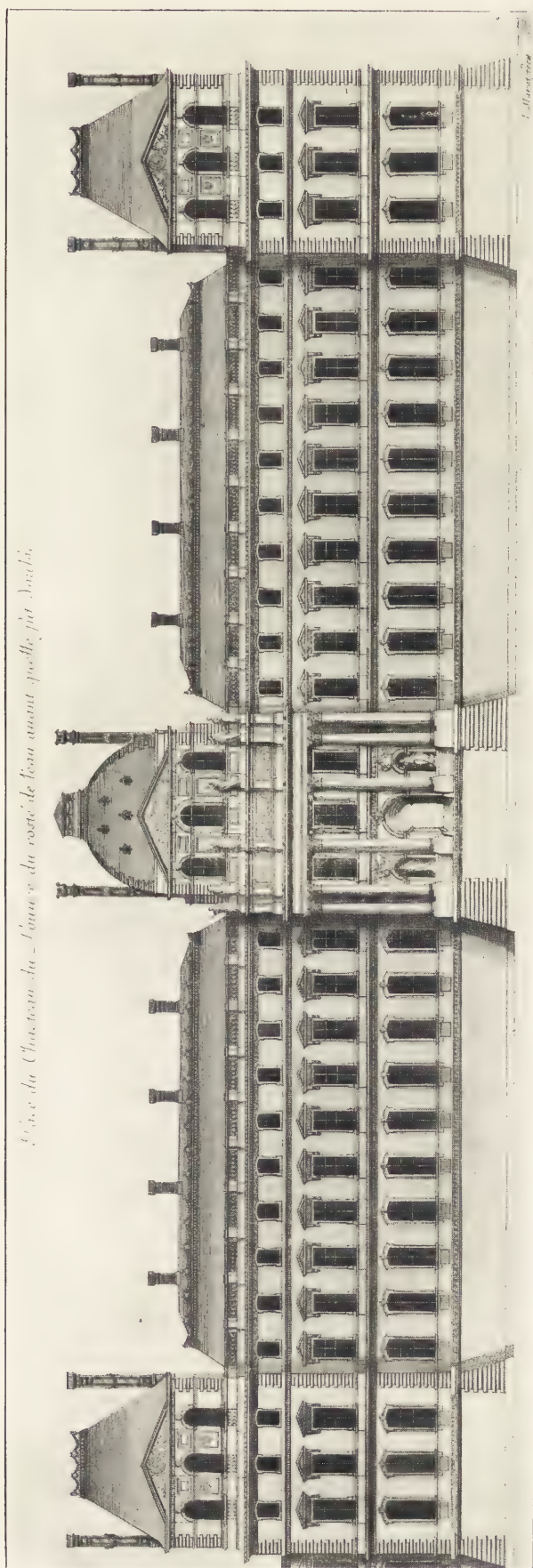


mansard roof elaborately enriched. The centre pavilion, which followed the general outline of Lemercier's pavilion to the Court, was an extraordinary composition; a colossal order of Corinthian columns supported an entablature, above which was a pedestal storey breaking out over the columns. Above this storey was an attic with three arched openings, the centre half elliptical and running up into the frieze, the two sides semicircular, with an entablature and pediment, and a square domical roof. The proportions were bad, the design was greatly overcrowded with detail, and Le Vau, who designed piecemeal, made little attempt to connect the design of this pavilion with the wings on either side of it. Among other faults of detail Blondel calls attention to the bad habit, common in the seventeenth century architecture of France, of breaking up the roofs. "L'interruption de les combles semble diviser en apparence chaque avant corps en<sup>1</sup> autant de corps de logis particuliers." Le Vau, as I have pointed out in the case of Vaux le Vicomte, was a bad offender in this regard. Apart from these defects, the intervening wings and the end pavilions up to the level of the balustrade seem to me to have been well designed and more satisfactory than the ambitious effort of Claude Perrault which superseded them.

In 1661, immediately after the fall of Fouquet, Le Vau made his first plans for the re-modelling of Versailles, preserving the hunting lodge of Louis XIII, the "petit château de Cartes," as Saint-Simon contemptuously calls it, but greatly enlarging the whole building. The work proceeded slowly till 1668, when some of the building already completed was taken down, and the three blocks of buildings enclosing the old château on three sides were built from Le Vau's design, together with an orangery afterwards destroyed to make way for the existing orangery. Le Vau's designs were selected after a competition in which Le Pautre, Perrault, Jacques Gabriel, and Vigarani are said to have competed, and it was one of the best that he ever made. The work was continued by D'Orbay after his death, until the whole control of Versailles was handed over to J. H. Mansart.

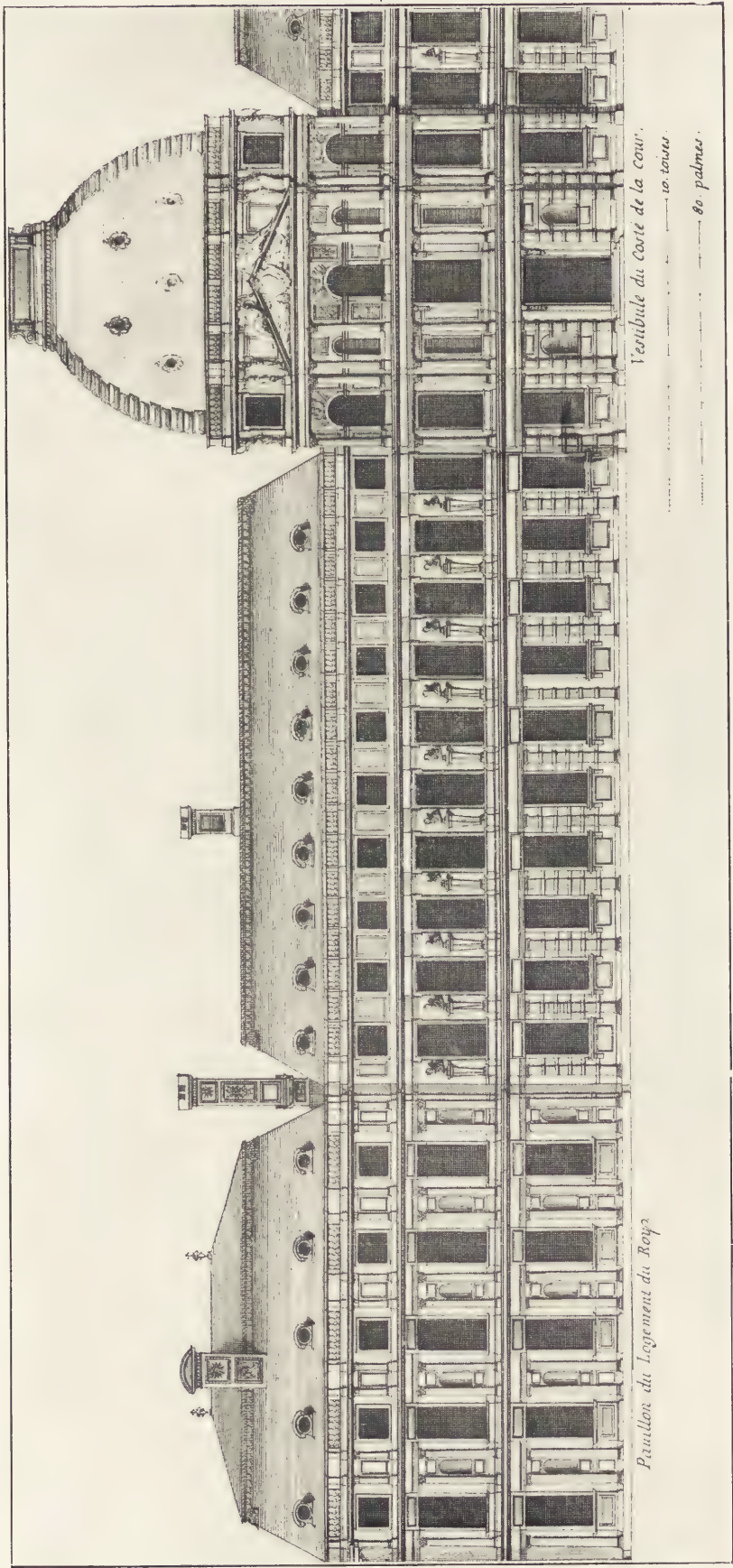
In 1664 Le Vau was employed to remodel and complete the Tuileries. At that date the building consisted of the central pavilion with its famous staircase and the two-storey wings on either side designed by De L'Orme, and to the south of these, the three-storey blocks added by Bullant, and beyond these again, the block with the

<sup>1</sup> Blondel, "Arch. Franc.," pt. iv, 57. Le Vau's scheme for the completion of the Louvre will be dealt with in the next chapter.



THE LOUVRE. SOUTH FRONT AS REBUILT BY LE VAU (p. 62)





THE TUILERIES, SHOWING THE ENTRANCE AND WINGS AS REMODELLED BY LE VAU (see p. 63)





1 et 2. Appartements du Roy et de la Reine.  
 3. Salle des Ambassadeurs.  
 4. Grand Salon.  
 5. Salle des Ambassadeurs et audiences la Salle.  
 6. Galeries du Louvre.  
 7. le Vestibule.  
 8. la Chapelle.  
 9. Salon de l'Amphithéâtre des Machines.  
 10. Salle du Jeu de la Cour.  
 11. Corps de Garde ou 1<sup>re</sup> Cour.

[Perelle

THE TUILERIES FROM THE WEST AS ALTERED BY LE VAU (see p. 63)





THE TUILERIES—NORTH PAVILION. LE VAU, FOLLOWING DU CERCEAU (p. 63)

colossal Corinthian<sup>1</sup> order and the huge pavilions at the south end next the river, designed by the younger Du Cerceau under Henri IV and Louis XIII. Le Vau completed the palace up to the north pavilion, including the theatre and Salle des Machines, but altered the scale and character of the whole design. Except that he reproduced Du Cerceau's pavilion at the north end, he showed the least possible regard for the work of his predecessors. On the south end pavilion he removed two dormers, rather to the improvement of the design, but from this point his conduct was simply amazing.<sup>2</sup> He removed the tourelles in the re-entering angles of Du Cerceau's block, and substituted a mansart roof for the original roof. In Bullant's work he removed the very characteristic lucarnes with their broken pediments and trophies, and replaced them by a dull attic storey and balustrade with a mansard roof. He also destroyed Bullant's niches and transformed a very interesting and mature example of that considerable architect into a commonplace building of the time of Louis XIV. As for De l'Orme's work he seems to have considered it as barbarous and of no account, and the only part that he left was the ground floor arcade. All above this he pulled down, and erected in its place two storeys and an attic in the roof. In the centre he took in an additional bay on either side, and constructed one of the largest and most elaborate of all his vast pavilions. It appears to have been hopelessly out of scale with the adjoining buildings. I do not doubt that he was urged on to this wholesale reconstruction by Colbert, who was anxious at all costs to keep the King in Paris, but the work carried out at the Tuileries by Le Vau and his son-in-law, D'Orbay, appears to have shown a disregard of the work of their predecessors that was little less than brutal.

The only church attributed to Le Vau is that of S. Louis en l'Isle, completed by Le Duc and Doucet, and the original design of

<sup>1</sup> The term "colossal" is used to describe an order which runs through two or more storeys, as opposed to the order above order in which each storey is marked by one order.

<sup>2</sup> For a most illuminating criticism on Le Vau's work at the Tuileries, see Blondel (J. F.), "Cours d'Architecture," iii, 73-78. The elder Blondel (François), "Cours d'Architecture," part v, p. 783 (ed. 1698), mentions that in the recent works at the Tuileries a certain fluted Ionic column of the façade, known to have been the work of Jean Goujon, had been scraped down in order to show it all white like the rest. The result, he says, was fatal, "Ce peu de changement arrivé par le regratement luy ayant osté ce je ne sçai quoy de justesse qui estoit la cause de ce plaisir surprenant." Blondel was a highly educated man who respected antiquity. Le Vau, and afterwards J. H. Mansart, appear to have been wholly insensible to its value. The scraping referred to was probably done under Le Vau. For Perelle's bird's-eye view of the Tuileries see "Hist. of French Architecture, 1494-1661," Blomfield, i, plate L.



S. Sulpice begun in 1665, but only carried out in the East Chapel. His most important work was probably the Collège Mazarin, or "des Quatre Nations," now the Institut, founded by Mazarin shortly before his death. The site was on the south side of the river, opposite the Louvre, and part of it had once been occupied by the Grand and Petit Hôtel de Nesle. The foreshore was irregular, there was no embankment to the river, and the front facing the river formed an obtuse angle, with the main part of the building running back behind it. Le Vau dealt with this difficult problem in a masterly way. He placed his principal building, the chapel, parallel to the river and on the axis line of his south entrance to the Louvre, on the opposite bank. Two-storey wings set out on a segment of a circle connect this with advanced pavilions at either end, the east wing forming a screen to a court between the chapel and the south pavilion, and behind the court were ranged the lecture rooms, a large court and gardens, and the College buildings running along the Rue Mazarin on the west side. He formed an embankment and balustrade on the river front, and in this way managed to produce an imposing and symmetrical façade on this extremely awkward site. The building is too close to the river, but Le Vau treated his retaining wall as an integral part of the design, and the effect has to be judged from the other side of the river. The dome and drum, which are circular in plan outside, are elliptical inside. Blondel suggests that this was done to provide room for two newel staircases in the thickness of the wall. To do Le Vau justice, it may have also been because he had learnt from his own failures elsewhere the extremely ugly effect of an elliptical dome as seen from outside. Blondel also points out that owing to the absence of any pedestal storey, the lower part of the composite order of pilasters round the drum is lost. There are other faults of detail in this design; the discrepancy in scale of the ill-designed double order of the connecting wings with the colossal order of the centre and the end pavilions; the prodigious urns which emerge through the roof, the slope of the roof which is carried down to the edge of the cornice without any blocking course, and the coarseness of detail throughout the façade. Blondel, who was fully alive to his shortcomings, says he was considered "un des plus habiles hommes de son tems." Able he may have been as a man of affairs, but he was neither an artist nor a scholar in his art. A comparison of his work with that of François Mansart shows the difference there is between the work of the merely competent practitioner and that of a genuine architect.





*Vue et Perspective du Collège des 4 Nations.*

*A Paris chez J. Mariette rue St Jacques a la victoire. avec Priv. dessinée et gravée par Perelle.*

L'INSTITUT DE FRANCE, FORMERLY THE COLLÈGE MAZARIN OR "DES QUATRE NATIONS"—LE VAU (p. 64)

Perelle





Le Vau died in 1670, and was buried at S. Germain L'Auxerrois, opposite the Louvre, the scene of his earlier triumphs and in the latter years of his life of his most bitter disappointment. Other men were superseding him, and his manner was already out of fashion. Though very successful professionally, he had never been a first-rate architect; his manner was based on Lemercier, but without the quality that distinguishes the work of that able architect. Blondel credited him with a certain boldness and freedom of fancy, as a possible excuse for his technical vagaries. My own impression is that these vagaries were due to uncertain taste, ignorance of technique, and lack of architectural imagination. In his later works he was helped by his younger brother, François, and his son-in-law D'Orbay. François Le Vau was on the regular building staff of the King, receiving 1,000 livres a year, but he never appears to have got any further. He is said to have been in charge of the arsenal built by Colbert at Rochfort from the designs by François Blondel, but his work is not to be distinguished from that of his brother.

François D'Orbay, son-in-law of Louis Le Vau, was born in 1634, and came of a family of builders. A François D'Orbay, who died in 1677, is described in the registers of St. Eustache as "maître entrepreneur des bastiments du Roi, ancien syndic de la communauté des maîtres massons, dixerier de cette ville et bourgeois de Paris."<sup>1</sup> Another D'Orbay, Thomas, is entered as "entrepreneur des bastiments du Roy" in the same register. François, the architect, carried on the practice of Le Vau till his death in 1697, completing the Collège des Quatre Nations and Le Vau's designs for Versailles. He designed the church of S. Germain, the convent of the Capucins, and the Hôtel des Comédiens Français at Paris. He also designed the Cathedral of Montauban, but the structure failed early in the eighteenth century, and De Cotte,<sup>2</sup> who was called in, reported that the vault had fallen in because it was too high, and that if the clock tower was repeated on D'Orbay's design, it would certainly collapse. D'Orbay designed the entrance of the church of the Carmelites and the Chapelle de Villeroy at Lyon, and the triumphal Arc de Peyron at Montpellier, carried out by Daviler. He was an "architecte du Roi" at a salary of 2,000 francs a year, and an original member of the Academy of Architecture. That body had a high opinion of his merits, and entered in their minutes of

<sup>1</sup> Herluison, "Actes d'État-Civil d'artistes Français."

<sup>2</sup> "Inventaire des papiers manuscrits du Cabinet de Robert de Cotte," p. 159, Pierre Marcel, 1906. Montauban is between Cahors and Toulouse.



9th September 1697, a note of his death, "regretté de toute la compagnie." D'Orbay was hardly an architect of distinction, but the worst thing one knows of him is his claim that Le Vau and not Perrault designed the colonnade of the Louvre; otherwise he appears to have been an honest and amiable man—Germain Brice, who knew him well, says he was "bon architecte, qui joignoit à la connoissance de son art un disinteressement et une probité reconnue; cépendant ces rares qualités ne lui avoient procuré aucune fortune."<sup>1</sup> Nor were they likely to at the Court of Louis XIV. D'Orbay was buried in the church of S. Germain L'Auxerrois. His son was elected a member of the Academy in 1705, and was created a chevalier of the order of S. Michel, but I cannot find that he was an architect of any particular merit. He died in 1742. Of this family group Louis Le Vau seems to have been the only one that possessed anything more than average ability. The Academy, in a fit of generous sympathy in 1697, declared the dome of the Collège des Quatres Nations to be the most beautiful in Paris, but in 1708 they altered their minds, and found very serious fault with its design.

Among Le Vau's pupils were J. Richer and Lambert. Some inferior designs by Richer of large houses in Paris were engraved by Jean Marot. Pierre Lambert was employed under D'Orbay at Versailles to set out the alignment of the houses in the new town of Versailles at a salary of 1,600 francs; in 1677 this was raised to 2,000.<sup>2</sup> In 1682 he was employed on the Machine de Marly. In 1692<sup>3</sup> he became "Contrôleur des Bâtiments" with a salary of 4,000 francs, raised to 5,000 in 1698, in which year he was at work at Compiègne. In 1700 he received an allowance for lodgings at Versailles, and 1,000 francs for his commis. Mansart was now *Surintendant*, and it must be admitted looked well after his friends. In 1706-7 Lambert was in charge of the work at Versailles,<sup>4</sup> and in this year his son appears in the accounts as a draughtsman in the office of the *Surintendant* at a salary of 1,200 francs. Lambert's duties appear to have been those of an official of an Office of Works in control of the Royal palaces. Thus in 1708 he superintended the cleaning of the forecourt at Versailles, the capture of moles in the grounds, the polishing of the mirrors, the turning of models, and works done by the "veuve Lacroix, épingliere," matters having no relation whatever to architecture. Notwithstanding, Lambert was elected a member of the Academy of Architecture in 1699, and duly drew his fees for attendance till his death in March 1709. His

<sup>1</sup> "Description de la Ville de Paris," i, 195.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, 789, and iv, 413.

<sup>2</sup> "Comptes," i, 786, 998.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, v, 127, 187.

work as an architect was unimportant; and, indeed, the manner of his old master Le Vau was out of fashion before his death, and had no chance against the younger men. Le Vau's displacement at the Louvre marks the end of the old *régime*, and the rise not only of the new school of the reign of Louis XIV, but of that modern and characteristic version of classical architecture which, with many changes and aberrations, is still not wholly lost in France.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE COMPLETION OF THE LOUVRE. BERNINI AND CLAUDE PERRAULT

FROM the first Colbert had made it a vital point in his policy to keep the King in Paris. Henri IV had identified himself with his capital, and had prepared far-reaching schemes for its improvement and development.<sup>1</sup> These schemes were only realized in part, and under his successor no attempt was made to continue them, but Colbert, who foresaw the danger to the monarchy of its isolating itself from Paris, was bent on picking up the broken threads of a great and sagacious policy, and as a first step towards it he decided to begin with the completion of the Louvre. As he put it in his famous letter to the King in 1665, "s'appliquer tout de bon à achever le Louvre." It was by no means an easy task to persuade the King. Fired by what he had seen at Vaux, Louis XIV had set his heart on a house of his own, and the first additions to Versailles were already begun. Writing to the King in 1665, Colbert pointed out that in the past two years more than 500,000 écus had been spent on Versailles, whereas nothing had been done at the Louvre, and that the accounts of the Royal buildings would always record the fact,<sup>2</sup> that these large sums had been spent on a house that existed for the "plaisir et le divertissement de votre Majeste," rather than for its glory. He continued, "votre Majeste sçait qu'au défaut des actions éclatantes de la guerre, rien ne marque davantage la grandeur et l'esprit des princes que les bastimens; et toute la postérité les mesure à l'aune de ces superbes maisons qu'ils ont élevées pendant leur vie. O quelle pitié que le plus grand roy et le plus vertueux, de la véritable vertu que fait les plus grands princes, fust mesuré à l'aune de Ver-

<sup>1</sup> See "A History of French Architecture, 1494-1661," Blomfield, vol. ii, chap. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> Colbert actually went so far as to say that had he foreseen the amount so expended, he would have removed any trace of its record.

sailles."<sup>1</sup> Colbert's appeal was successful, and in 1665 the work of completing the Louvre was seriously taken in hand. Le Vau had already completed part of the north side of the Louvre and the south façade to the river, and it appears from Charles Perrault's account, that a start had been made on the east side under Ratabon, Colbert's predecessor, and part of the building was already eight or ten feet above ground.<sup>2</sup> Colbert was so dissatisfied with this, that he had a wood model made of Le Vau's design, and invited the architects of Paris to criticize the design, and to submit suggestions. The architects of Paris, instead of standing by their colleague, at once condemned his design, and produced designs of their own. Meanwhile, Claude Perrault, prompted by his brother Charles, who was now Colbert's secretary, produced an anonymous design, which, according to his brother, was of such outstanding merit that it took the world by storm.<sup>3</sup> It was decided to send these designs to Poussin in Rome, in order that he might obtain the opinion of the most famous Italian architects then living, more particularly of Pietro di Cortona, Rainaldi and Bernini, and a letter to Poussin was drafted by Charles Perrault, giving him instructions as to procedure, and nominating him as Director of the newly established French Academy at Rome. This letter was not sent, but the designs were, and the Italian architects followed the example of their colleagues in Paris by at once sending in designs of their own, "tous fort bizarres et n'avoient aucun goût de la belle et sage architecture."<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, the friends of Bernini had been impressing on Colbert that there was only one man in the world for the work, and that he was the Cavaliere Bernini, painter, sculptor, and architect, sixty-seven years old, and the most considerable artist then living. For over thirty years Bernini had been supreme among the artists of Europe. In 1636 Charles I had asked him to make his portrait in marble, and Vandyke's three heads were painted for the purpose. In 1639 Henrietta Maria sent him a diamond valued at 6,000 scudi as a mark of her admiration for his work. In 1642 he had

<sup>1</sup> "Lettres de Colbert," vol. i, v, pp. xxxvii and 268 (ed. Clement), quoted by Guiffrey. "Comptes," i, xxix.

<sup>2</sup> "Mémoires de Perrault" (ed. Bonnefon), p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> In the "Comptes" for 1688, i, 277, there is an entry of 4,000 francs 6 sous 8 deniers to be paid to the "Sieur Chambré" for having come from Mans to Paris, and spent six months in examining all the designs made for the completion of the Louvre. The "Sieur Chambré" was our old friend, Roland Fréart de Chambray, of the Parallels of Architecture.

<sup>4</sup> Perrault, "Mémoires," pp. 54-57.



made a famous bust of Richelieu. In 1644 Louis XIII and Mazarin had invited Bernini to Paris, but the great man had not accepted the invitation. He was President of the Academy of S. Luke in Rome, architect of S. Peter's, (which he very nearly let down on the floor,) the maker of the Baldachino out of the bronze stripped from the Pantheon, and an artist of universal accomplishment and European reputation. This time Colbert was determined to get him. Accordingly Bernini was summoned to Paris by a personal letter from the King himself, and his journey to France was in the nature of a triumphal progress. When he left Rome, the whole population turned out in its anxiety lest Louis XIV should keep him in France. The officials of all the towns on the way were ordered to present him with gifts. Lyons treated him as a prince of the blood, officers were sent from the Court, and the King's own *maître d'hôtel*, M. de Chambray, was told off to accompany him wherever he went.<sup>1</sup> Bernini arrived in May, and was lodged in the Hôtel de Frontenac, where he set aside a room for the exhibition of his designs, to which no one was admitted but Colbert, and Chambray, the *maître d'hôtel*. Charles Perrault, however, managed to get in, and set about his schemes for the elimination of Bernini and the introduction of his brother. He admits that when Colbert asked if he had seen Bernini's designs, he denied having done so, and proceeded to ask leading questions, "qui alloit à lui (Colbert) faire remarquer que le cavalier Bernini étoit tombé dans les mêmes défauts que l'on reprochoit au dessein de M. Le Vau et de la plupart des autres architectes."<sup>2</sup> Bernini, in spite of his great reception, never had fair play in France. Charles Perrault grossly abused his office in the interest of his brother, and by his persistent intrigue made Bernini's position impossible. From the very first the French architects were determined that whoever did the work it should not be Bernini or any foreign architect. Moreover, it was part of Colbert's deliberate policy to make France independent of all foreigners,<sup>3</sup> and to keep France for the French.

<sup>1</sup> Perrault, "Mémoires," p. 59, says: "C'est une chose qui n'est pas croyable que les honneurs que l'on fit au cavalier Bernini," and this does not overstate the case. See "Gazette des Beaux Arts," 1877-78, "Journal du Voyage du Cavalier Bernini en France," par N. Lalanne. M. de Chambray was brother of Roland Fréart de Chambray, author of the "Parallels of Architecture," who had already examined the designs for the Louvre.

<sup>2</sup> "Mémoires," p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> The last of the Italian workmen at the Court disappear soon after this date. Pietro Fassy, "stucateur," Bernardino (Rossi), stone-cutter, and Patriarca, mason, are not heard of in the "Comptes" after 1667.

As a fact Bernini's designs were impossible. In 1665 the south and west and part of the north sides of the Louvre were completed, together with the return buildings southward to the river at the south-west angle connecting up with the galleries of the Louvre, which ran along the river till they joined the south pavilion of the Tuileries. The east front, facing S. Germain L'Auxerrois, had yet to be built, and the façade to the river to be altered. On the north, east, and west sides, buildings came right up to the Louvre, and on the west side the ground between the Louvre and the Tuileries was occupied by streets, courtyards, and masses of buildings, with a small court, the "place du vieux Louvre," next the Louvre, and the small "Place du Carrousel," between the Rue S. Nicaise and the Tuileries.<sup>1</sup> A great and comprehensive scheme was necessary; at the same time it was a condition of the design that the existing buildings were to be left.<sup>2</sup> Bernini, with characteristic impatience, entirely ignored this condition. He prepared a gigantic scheme, which involved as a necessary preliminary step the demolition of all the existing buildings of the Louvre, with the exception of the gallery of Apollo, and the galleries connecting with the Tuileries. His plan of the Louvre was an oblong about 780 feet out to out east and west, and about 480 feet north and south. This was subdivided into a large central court about 315 feet square, with salients in the four angles where were placed four grand staircases; a peristyle was to run all round the interior of the court, with a single thickness of building in the north and south sides, and on the east and west sides two smaller courts for light and air to the buildings of the main court and the buildings beyond, forming the east and west façades. The principal entrance was to be on the east side with a vista through the entire length of the building from east to west into the gigantic court on the west side which was carried right home to the east side of the Tuileries buildings, and measured 1,200 feet by about 800 feet, involving the clearance of several streets and a great quantity of buildings. The elevation consisted of a battered and rusticated basement, or plinth, with three storeys and a mezzanine. On the east or entrance façade he omitted the mezzanine. This façade was divided up by a colossal Corinthian order running up from the first floor to the huge entablature above the third floor, and instead of one principal

<sup>1</sup> See Blondel's map of the Louvre, Tuileries, and adjoining buildings ("Arch. Franc.," iv, part 4). Such was the subsequent neglect of the Louvre that the stores put up in the Court of the Louvre for the works under Perrault are shown as still standing in 1756.

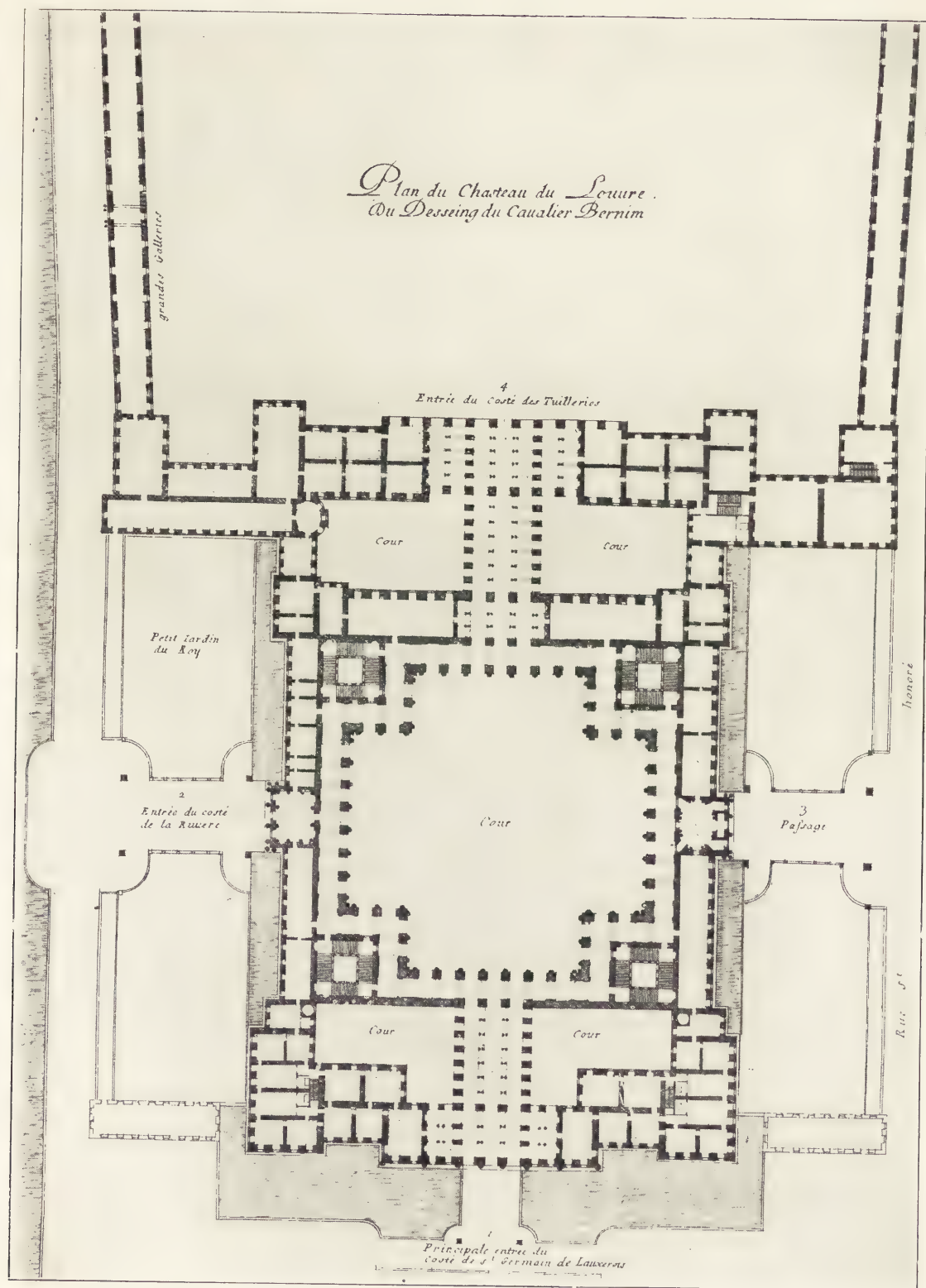
<sup>2</sup> Possibly Le Vau's havoc of the Tuileries had opened Colbert's eyes.



entrance he provided three rather unimportant archways, separated by two statues and without any other ornament. The design was utterly unsuitable for its purpose. The omission of the mezzanine on the east front would have rendered the lighting impossible. Bernini appears to have overlooked the necessity of all kinds of offices which would be necessary for a palace, and to have considered it solely from the point of view of State ceremonials, without any provision for anybody living in the palace. As to the exterior, it is a nightmare of a design. The columns and pilasters are arranged on no system worth considering. No serious attempt was made at architectural composition, and its design is full of solecisms.<sup>1</sup> The best part of Bernini's design was undoubtedly the interior of the great court; a colonnade of a colossal Corinthian order ran round all the sides of the Court with a two-storey arcade between these columns, an open loggia on the ground floor and an open gallery on the first floor. The design of the interior hangs well together, and shows none of the uncertainty of taste and treatment which disfigured his designs of the exterior. Blondel found something to admire in the magnitude of Bernini's conception. He may have thought that he was designing a palace for the greatest monarch in the world, and therefore gave full play to his natural and instinctive megalomania. The fact was that Bernini approached architecture from the wrong point of view, and his standpoint must have been peculiarly repugnant to the logical intelligence of the French. He was an impulsive artist of great ability, who if he made his point, that is if he startled people by calculated audacity, cared little how he made it. His instincts were essentially dramatic, and even melodramatic; the worst possible temperament for an architect. Perrault says of him: "en un mot, je suis persuadé qu'en fait d'architecture il n'excelloit guère que dans les décorations et les machines de théâtre."<sup>2</sup> By training and natural endowment a sculptor, he had little respect for his art, treating it as a vehicle for impressions which can only be conveyed rightly by other arts. The modelling of his drapery suggests the quick sweep of a painter's brush full of colour. He himself said, "I make the marble supple as wax, and in my works I have united the resources of painting and sculpture." Bernini was the last man in the world to criticize himself unfavourably, and Perrault maliciously records his remark that it was God who inspired his design for the Louvre. Uniting the resources of painting and sculpture was one way of putting

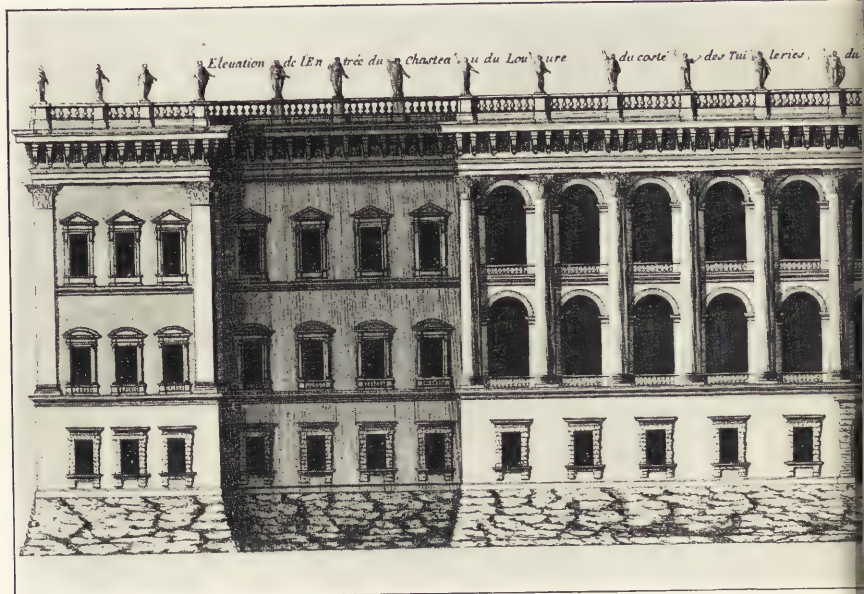
<sup>1</sup> See Blondel, "Arch. Franc.," iv, 49, 50.

<sup>2</sup> "Mémoires," p. 66.

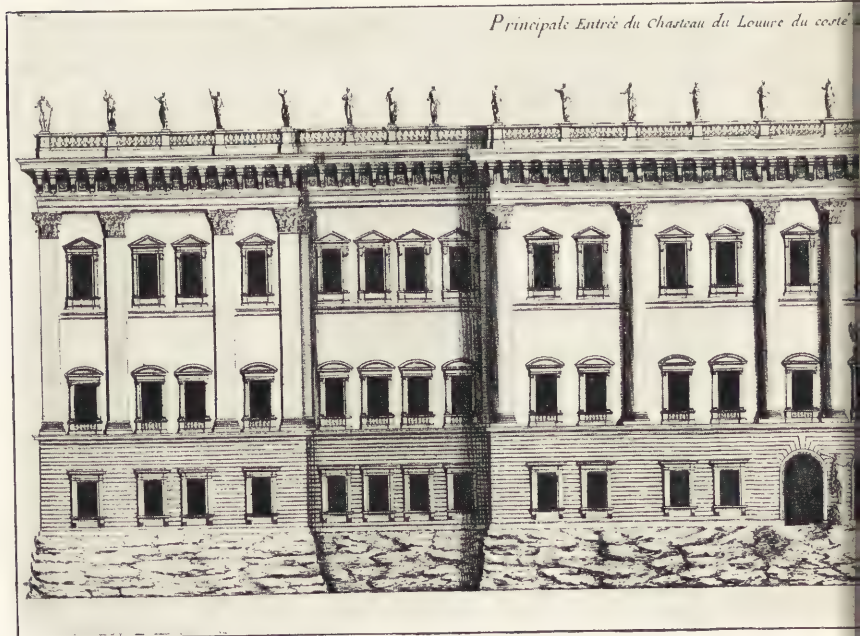


BERNINI'S DESIGN FOR THE LOUVRE. GROUND PLAN (see p. 71)

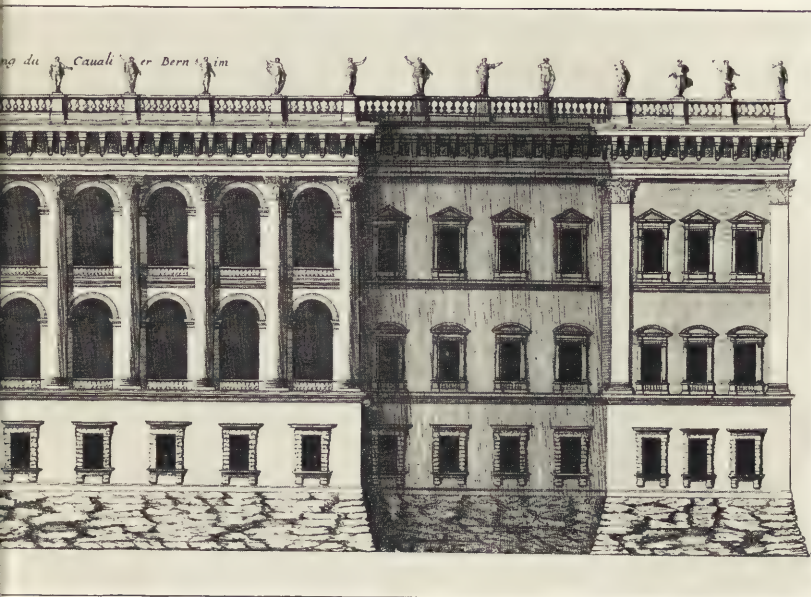




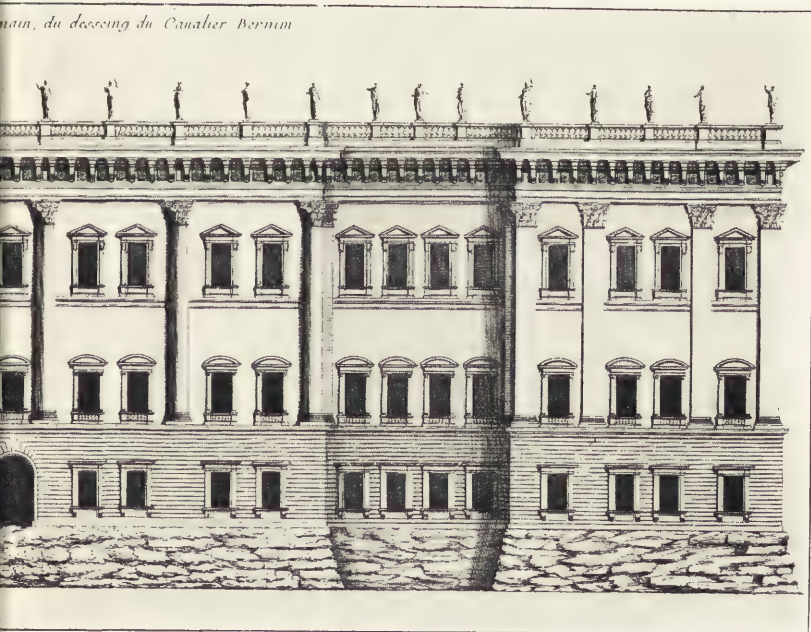
WEST



EAST ELEVATION AND  
BERNINI'S DESIGNS FOR



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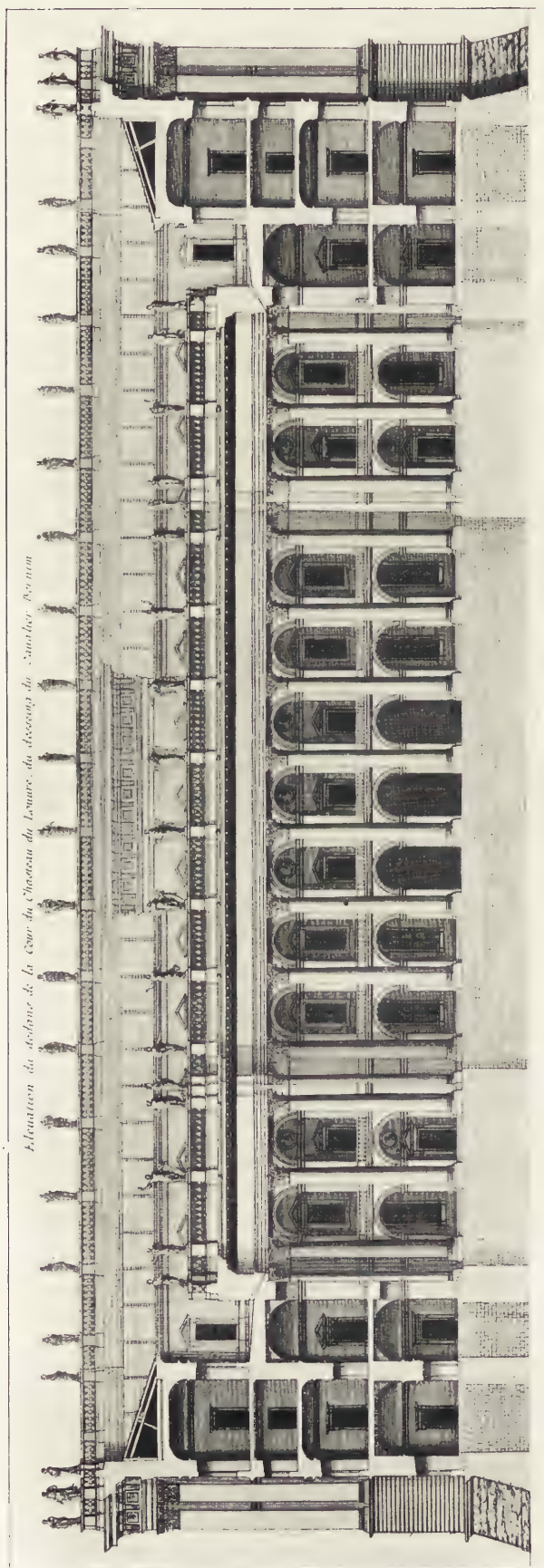


IPAL ENTRANCE

LOUVRE (see p. 71)

[J. Marot





BERNINI'S DESIGN FOR THE LOUVRE. SECTION THROUGH THE GREAT COURT (p. 72)

it. The other side of the case would be that in so doing he had confounded the limits of the two arts, and reduced each of them to impotence. Yet in spite of logic and "le goût de la belle et sage architecture," Bernini was a great and in some ways fascinating artist. His imagination moved in great spaces. His attempt to bring architecture into touch with sculpture was a move in the right direction, especially in modern art, when the architect remains paralysed within the lines of his design, and the sculptor has not learnt to consider his figures and reliefs as architectural assets. If Bernini could have begun with a thorough training in architecture, and then concentrated his fiery energy on sculpture, he might have done what Alfred Stevens, with a tithe of his opportunities, did 200 years later in England by sheer force of genius. So great, however, was Bernini's reputation that his design for the Louvre was approved, and a beginning was actually made with the foundations of the south front. The foundation stone was laid by the King with great ceremony on 27th October 1665. Bernini wrote an elaborate specification, and had his "muratori" specially sent from Rome. The building methods of the latter were vigorously criticized by the French contractors, and in order to settle the matter the Italians built two walls 5 or 6 feet high with a vault in their manner on the "place du palais Mazarin," and the French masons put up a similar construction in theirs. At the first frost in the winter following, the Italian construction fell to pieces, while that of the Frenchmen stood perfectly. The indefatigable Charles Perrault thereupon prepared a memorandum, calling Colbert's attention to the various faults of Bernini's design, and Colbert was much too shrewd a man of affairs to be wholly overpowered by Bernini's reputation. "Il auroit été malaisé de trouver deux génies plus opposés. Le cavalier n'entroit dans aucun détail, ne songeoit qu'à faire de grandes salles de comédie et de festins, et ne se mettoit en nulle peine de toutes les commodités, de toutes les sujettions et de toutes les distributions de logemens nécessaires, choses qui sont sans nombre et qui demandent une application que ne pouvoit prendre le génie vif et prompt du cavalier. . . . M. Colbert au contraire, vouloit de la précision, et savoir où et comment le roi seroit logé, comment le service, se pourroit faire commodément . . . et fatiguoit extrêmement le cavalier avec tous ces mémoires où il n'entendoit rien et ne vouloit rien entendre, s'imaginant mal à propos, qu'il étoit indigne d'un grand architecte comme lui de descendre dans ces minuties."<sup>1</sup> Perrault's estimate of the two men was

<sup>1</sup> "Mémoires," p. 66.



probably sound, but he never lost a chance of undermining Bernini's reputation, and kept Colbert constantly informed of Bernini's incompetence. On one occasion when Perrault was spying on Bernini's designs for the river front, the Cavalier burst into the room, called Perrault a dirty dog, told him that he was not fit to black his boots,<sup>1</sup> and that if he was to be insulted like this, for twopence halfpenny he would smash the King's bust and return to Italy. The bland and plausible Frenchman smoothed him down; and at once went off to Colbert to tell him all about it. Bernini appears to have realized himself that the game was up. In the winter he announced he could not stand the cold and must return to Italy, and nobody appears to have pressed him to stay. The King is said by Perrault to have given him 3,000 Louis d'or and a pension of 12,000 livres per annum for himself, and one of 1,200 livres for his son. Voltaire (*"Le Temple du Goust"*) says that Louis XIV gave Bernini 50,000 écus, his portrait set in diamonds, 100 francs a day during the whole of his absence from Rome, and a pension of 6,000 francs. Both Perrault and Voltaire exaggerated. I find from the *"Comptes"* that the actual sums he received were 30,000 francs<sup>2</sup> in advance at Rome in 1665, and in June 1666 a further sum of 33,000 francs *"en consideration de son mérite et des desseins qu'il a faits pour le Louvre."* The sums of money paid for the entertainment and expenses of Bernini and his suite amounted to 21,925 francs.<sup>3</sup> The actual pensions paid were 6,000 francs to the Cavalier, and 1,200 francs to his son, Paolo. His chief assistant, Matthias Rossi, received 9,000<sup>4</sup> francs for the year, May 1666 to May 1667, when he returned to Rome. Perrault's account of the whole proceeding, though very amusing, is obviously prejudiced, and he repeats malicious gossip. Bernini's pension was discontinued after 1673,<sup>5</sup> and in actual fact, having regard to his great position in Rome, the evidence of the *"Comptes"* shows that he was by no means overpaid. On the other hand, the King came off badly. All that he had got for

<sup>1</sup> *"Décrotter la semelle de ses souliers"* is the actual phrase. Perrault is perfectly frank in his account.

<sup>2</sup> *"Comptes,"* i, 97.

<sup>3</sup> In three payments of 10,500 francs, 4,036 francs, and 7,389 francs, for the expenses of the return journey. None of these payments were made to Bernini.

<sup>4</sup> *"Comptes,"* i, 158. M. Bonnefon in a note to Perrault's *"Mémoires,"* says Rossi received 70,000 livres as an indemnity for his return to Rome. This is wrong. He received 7,000 francs for the first five months of 1667 and his return to Rome (*"Comptes,"* i, 226).

<sup>5</sup> Bernini died in 1680, and was thus robbed of his pension, which was granted for life.

his money was the fine and somewhat flamboyant bust of himself, the foundations of an impossible building, and an equestrian statue at Versailles which Louis disliked so much that he ordered its destruction. For his part he had treated the great Italian handsomely, but nothing could have compensated the latter for the studied insults of the French artists.

The whole episode is curious, the reference of the designs to Italy, the importation of the most famous Italian artist of his time, and then the complete *volte-face*, and the organized and successful effort to drive him out of the country. It was a pity the invitation was ever sent, for the French never meant Bernini to do the work, and there was no reason why he should, for there were certainly better architects in France at the time than any that existed in Italy. It cost the country over a million francs, all wasted, for no sooner had Bernini left, than Charles Perrault persuaded Colbert to abandon Bernini's design and to start afresh, on the ground that that design involved the total destruction of the work already carried out at the Louvre under Lescot and Goujon, Lemercier and Le Vau, and the designs for its completion, prepared before the episode of Bernini's visit by Le Vau and Claude Perrault, were again submitted to the King at S. Germain-en-Laye. The scene, as described in Perrault's "Mémoires," is characteristic of the Court of Louis XIV. The King asked Colbert for his opinion. Colbert supported Le Vau's design, whereupon the King promptly decided on that of Perrault's. "Je vis que M. Colbert avoit agi en habile courtesan qui vouloit donner tout l'honneur du choix à son maître,"<sup>1</sup> and this became the regular practice at the Court when questions of architecture were considered, a practice developed into a fine art by Jules Hardouin Mansart. Perrault's intrigues were at length successful; he had manœuvred his brother Claude into the commission for the completion of the Louvre. Claude Perrault, however, was a Doctor and not an architect, and hostile criticism was inevitable. The ingenious secretary met it by the establishment of a "Conseil des Bâtiments," composed of Le Vau, Le Brun, and Claude Perrault, with Charles Perrault as Secretary. They quarrelled incessantly, but the two Perraults carried their point, and Colbert's lingering doubts were removed by a model to scale of the building showing its construction,

<sup>1</sup> Perrault, "Mémoires," p. 86. Colbert, however, had already employed Le Vau at Meudon, and for the designs of his house in Paris, and his advice may have been perfectly *bona fide*.



and even how it was to be held together with iron ties.<sup>1</sup> Bernini's foundations were removed, and Perrault's design put into execution.

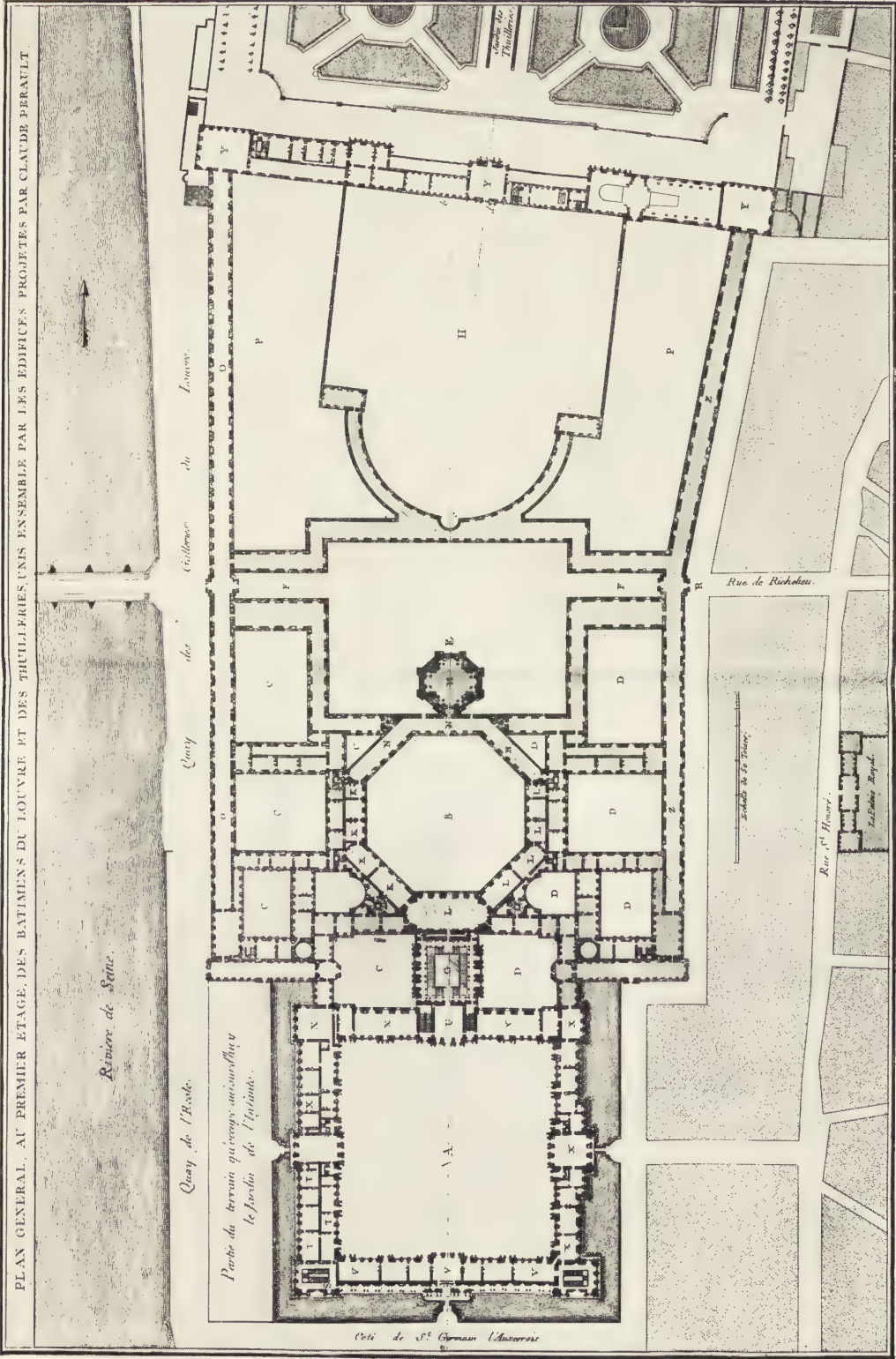
Perrault had prepared two schemes for the treatment of the whole site from the east front of the Louvre up to the west side of the Tuileries. The scheme shown first in Blondel preserved the existing three sides of the Louvre, and to the west of this provided a series of courts, a principal court, octagon in plan, about 250 feet in diameter, with several minor courts<sup>2</sup> for light and air, a "place" on the west side into which an octagon chapel projected, and beyond this again three courts carrying the design up to the Tuileries, and ingeniously masking the change of axis from the Louvre to the Tuileries by a semicircular façade to the court next the Tuileries. It was not, however, a good design. The vista through from S. Germain L'Auxerrois to the Tuileries, of which Bernini had made so fine a feature, was blocked in Perrault's plan by the grand staircase and a whole succession of buildings. The courts were crowded and ugly in shape; and the kitchen and offices were placed on the south side overlooking the river.

Perrault's other scheme, which he says was the first he prepared, started at the east end with the old courtyard, separated by a block of buildings with a circular staircase in the centre from a grand court 300 by 384 feet. To the west of this was an oval amphitheatre, measuring on the floor 325 feet on the major axis by 264 feet. This was intended for "comedies, operas, combats de bêtes féroces, et même une Naumachie ou combat naval, par le moyen de la pompe de la Samaritaine." To the west of the amphitheatre were three courts covering the ground up to the Tuileries. This plan was the finer of the two, and the courts were more reasonable, but there was again the serious defect that the axis line from east to west was blocked, and though Blondel calls the idea of the great oval court *grande et élevée*, it would have been useless for any practical purpose, and appears to have been little more than a piece of pedantry based on recollections of a motive in De L'Orme's original scheme for the Tuileries.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The whole story is admirably told in Perrault's "Mémoires," pp. 86-89. The model showed the actual size and number of the stones and iron bars to be used in the building "où le fer ne porte rien et ne fait que retenir la poussée des architraves."

<sup>2</sup> Including the main courts this design gave actually sixteen courts, exclusive of areas.

<sup>3</sup> Another of Perrault's ideas was to divide up the existing court of the Louvre into five divisions, the centre division circular. This, he says, was to meet the criticism that



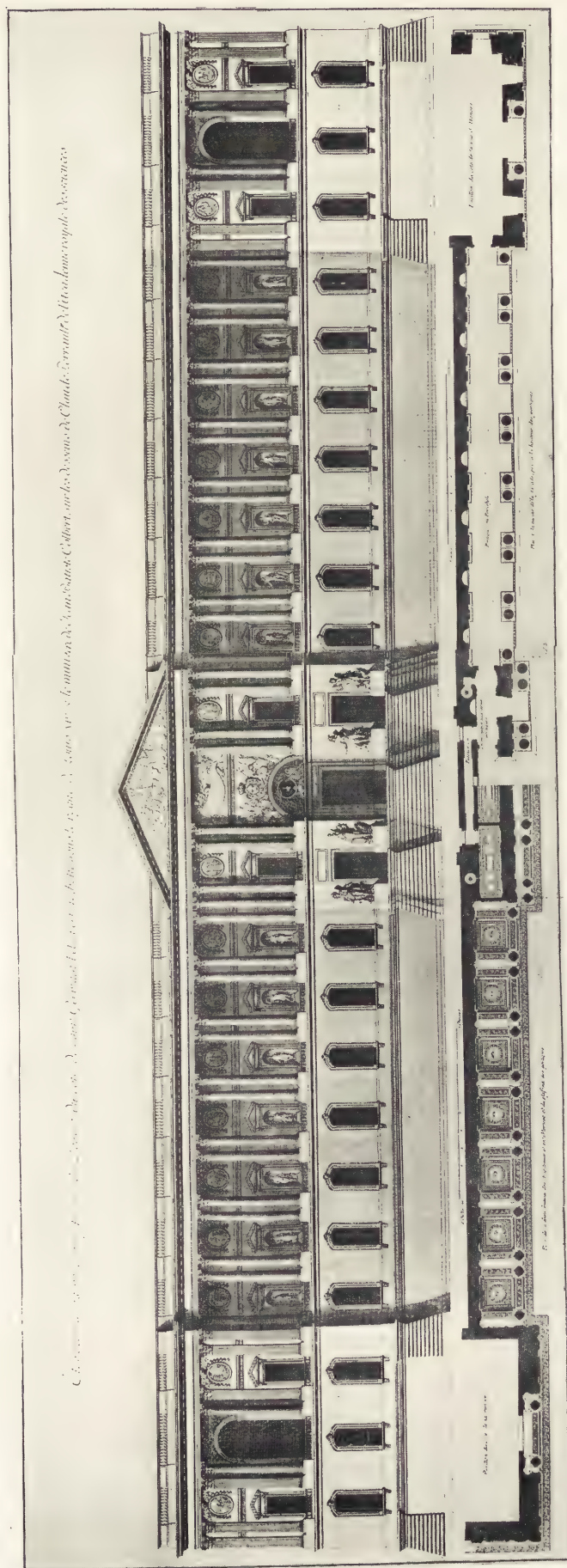
PLAN OF PERRAULT'S SECOND SCHEME FOR REBUILDING THE LOUVRE (p. 76)  
(BLONDEL, "ARCHITECTURE FRANÇAISE," IV, vi, 1)





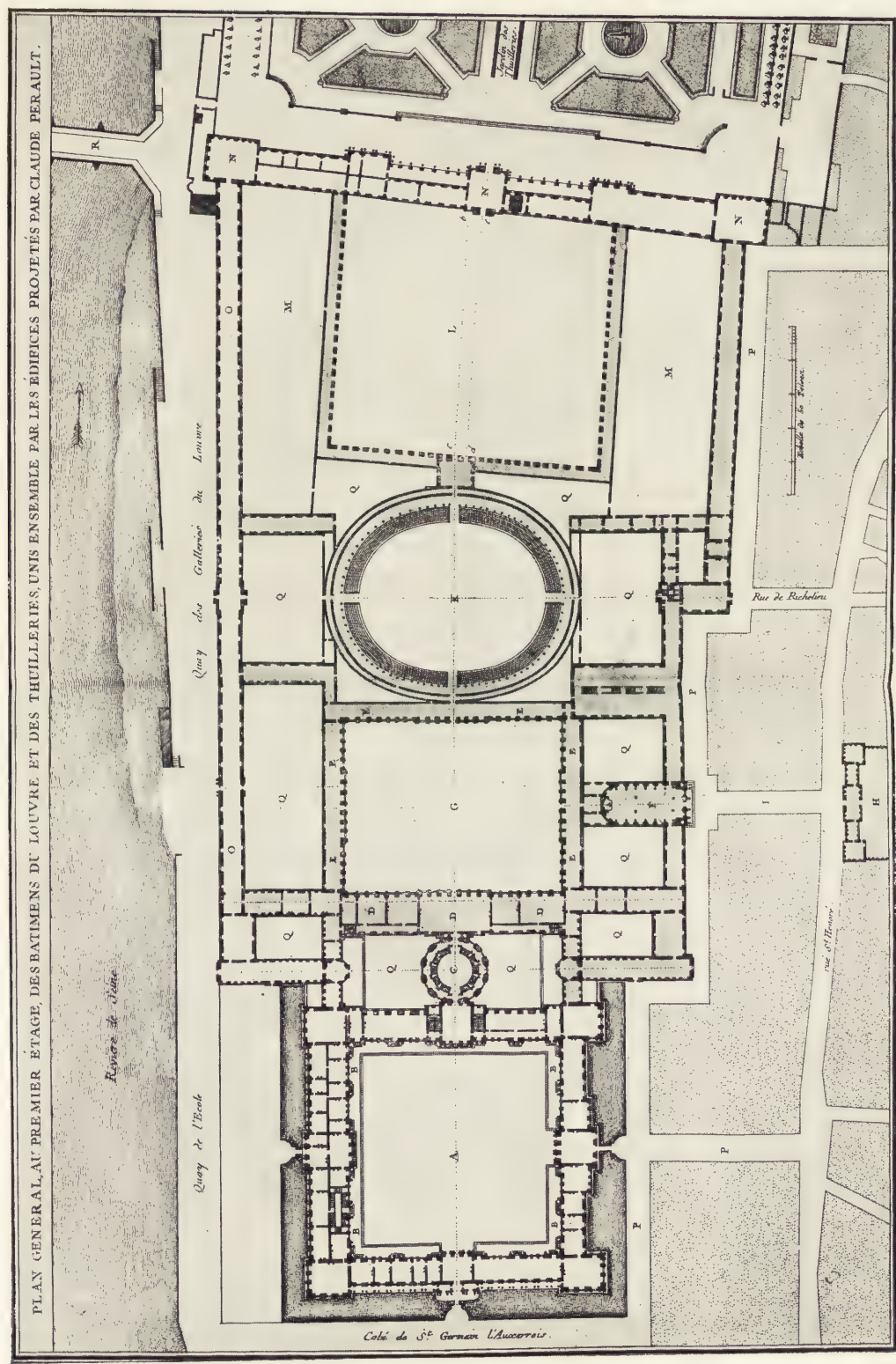






THE EAST FRONT OF THE LOUVRE. BY CLAUDE PERRAULT (see p. 77)

(BLONDEL, "ARCHITECTURE FRANÇAISE," IV, vi, 1, 7)



PLAN OF PERRAULT'S FIRST SCHEME FOR REBUILDING THE LOUVRE (see p. 76)  
(BLONDEL, "ARCHITECTURE FRANÇAISE," IV, vi, 2)

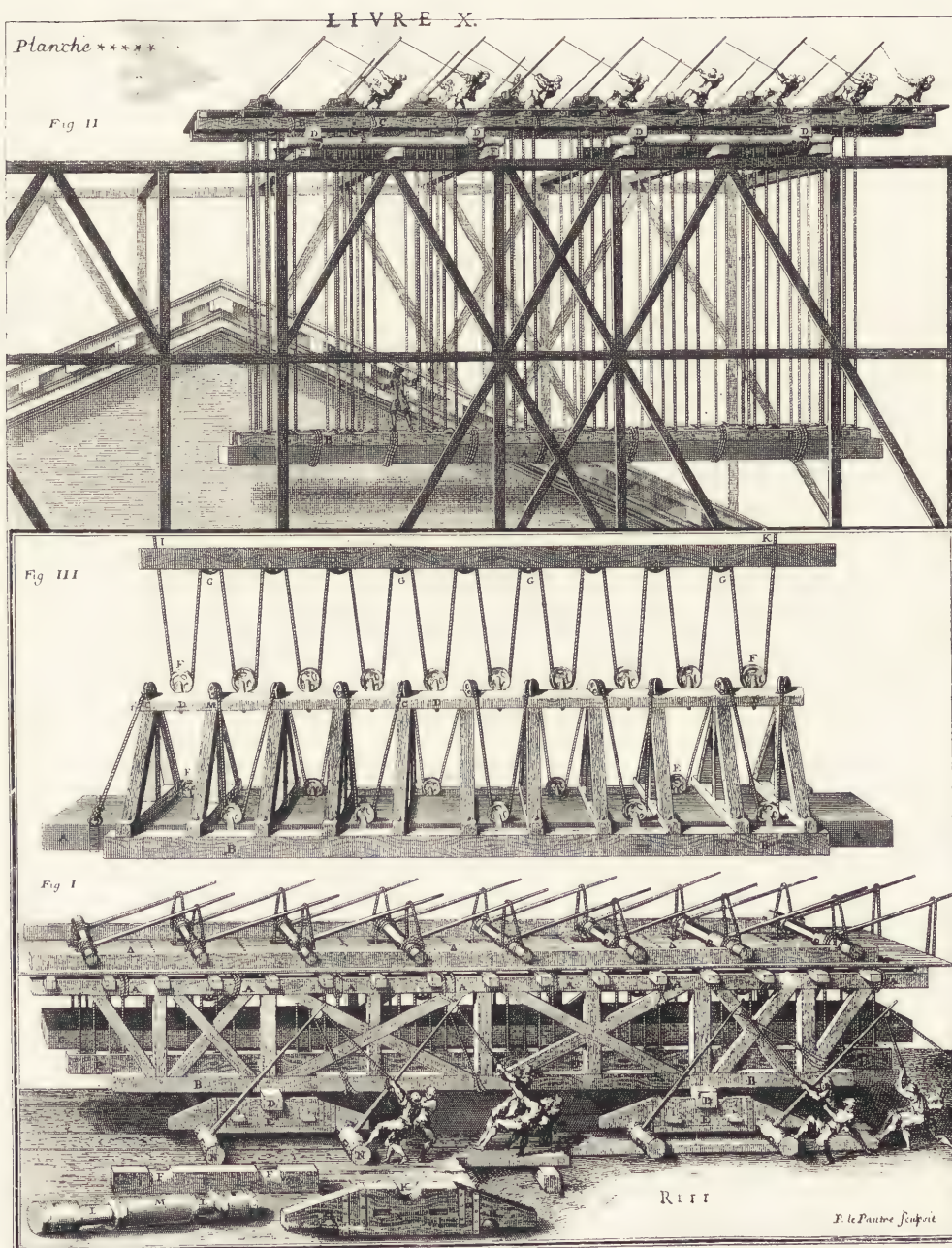






THE BUILDING OF THE LOUVRE. DRAWN BY SEBASTIAN LE CLERC (see p. 78)





THE MACHINERY FOR RAISING THE GREAT STONES OF THE PEDIMENT OF THE LOUVRE  
(PERRAULT'S "VITRUVIUS," p. 340)

These great schemes were never, in fact, attempted, and Perrault's work was limited to the east and south, and part of the north sides of the Louvre. He adhered conscientiously to Lescot and Goujon's design for the sides facing to the courtyard, but on the east side he began *de novo*. The work begun by Le Vau and by Bernini was removed, and at this, the third attempt, the work was begun from the bottom, and the façade, at any rate, completed by 1670. On the river side the considerable work carried out under Le Vau was left, but was buried behind the new river frontage built from Perrault's designs. Le Vau's great pavilion roof, however, still showed above Perrault's *avant-corps*, or centre-piece, when Blondel wrote in the following century.

The façades are too familiar to need description. Not only did Perrault startle his contemporaries by his double columns and other innovations in design, but he successfully carried through some remarkable feats of construction. His *avant-corps* had a pediment 92 feet wide and 18 feet high, carried on eight doubled Corinthian columns 3 feet 7 inches in diameter standing free. He had, therefore, to provide both for the security of his pediment and the very wide intercolumniations, and the precautions that he took show that Perrault was no mere irresponsible amateur. He used the hard S. Cloud stone for his columns and relieving arches, and the softer S. Leu for the ornament. The intercolumniations are formed with straight arches occupying the depth of the architrave and frieze, and the centre bay, which is 24 feet wide, has a camber of about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches, not only in view of possible settlements, but also to counteract any optical illusion of its appearing to sink in the middle. All the joints of the raking cornice of the pediment are vertical, not as usual at right angles, to the slopes, and at the foot of the pediment were placed stones 12 feet long, well tailed back into the wall. The stones (S. Leu) of the tympanum measure 15 feet long by 5 feet high, and the top ogee member of the raking cornice of the pediment, 52 by 8 feet by 18 inches thick, was formed of a single stone. Both sides were intended to be so dealt with, and one actually is, the other stone was broken into three pieces in hoisting. Blondel says the complete stone weighed 80,000 lb., nearly  $35\frac{3}{4}$  tons. The difficulties of quarrying these great stones, of transporting them from Meudon, and hoisting them some 120 feet, must have been stupendous. The methods of transport and hoisting are described and

the court was too large for the scale of the order (Goujon's) and he quoted as a precedent for such small courts the plan of the Escorial. He also proposed a terrace round the interior of the court, which would have destroyed the pedestals of the lowest order.



illustrated by Perrault in his "Vitruvius," pp. 439-443 (ed. 1684) and they are also shown in Leclerc's famous engraving of the building of the Louvre. The stones had to be brought from the high ground of Meudon, two leagues from Paris, and were conveyed up the Seine to the Louvre, and from the river to the foot of the wall, inside a huge wooden cage, constructed of very stout timbers framed together and braced and the full length of the stone. The stone itself was carried by beams, one on each side, the full length with eight sets of double pulleys to each beam, the ropes passing round these being taken up and down and finally attached to eight wooden shafts bearing on the side of the cage with circular bearings, each shaft having two levers. The whole construction rested on two axles with circular bearings resting on what Perrault calls "le petit assemblage" (E). These in turn rested on pairs of rollers (N), and the whole thing was moved along on these rollers by windlasses, each with a team of eight men, and also by four great levers on each side, each worked by two or three men with pulleys. A plank way was laid down, and in order to prevent back slips the rollers had iron collars studded with diamond-headed nails. This is shown in Fig. 1 in Perrault's plate. Having got his stone to the foot of the wall, Perrault then proceeded to remove the cage, but left the beams on either side of the stone with their pulleys, lashing them to the stone with ropes in eight places. From the lower pulleys ropes were taken up to a second set of beams with pulleys all as in the lower beams, this second set of beams being supported by cross-beams with roller bearings carried by double scaffolding high above the building. The stone, lower beams and all, was then hoisted up, moved back to a position vertically over the wall, and lowered into place on to a bed of mortar thick enough to admit of the removal of the ropes. The process is shown in Fig. II of Perrault's plate. Fig. III shows another method proposed, but not used. The great danger feared was that the ropes would pull unequally, and to meet this the ropes were passed in and out over the various pulleys, "à donner plus de force au cable par tirer, et à faire qu'il ne tirait pas avec trop de roideur," and in order to make sure that the strain was uniform, the foreman with heroic courage appears to have gone up with the stone, moving backwards and forwards along its upper surface, and testing the ropes to see that they were all doing their work. He is shown doing this in Fig. II. Perrault's idea was suggested by a remark of Vitruvius on the Roman method of testing the ropes of catapults by sound, the officer in charge having to ascertain that the notes of the ropes

in tension were identical.<sup>1</sup> Perrault devoted very close attention to the jointing of his masonry, and he also devised an elaborate system of iron cramps, ties, anchors and chains, tying all the parts of his pediment together, and back to the main wall. French masons have always been the most skilful in the world, and they must have been called upon to perform such prodigies in carrying out Perrault's designs that their names are worth preserving. From May 1665 to April 1666 Mazière and Bergeron, the contractors for masonry, received 430,000 francs,<sup>2</sup> and large payments in years following, and it appears from the "Comptes" that they supplied the various models of Perrault's designs. These men were also principal masons at Versailles, and though Perrault is said to have designed his own machinery for transport and hoisting, I expect much of the credit, in fact, was due to Mazière and Bergeron. The columns were delivered from S. Cloud in 1668. In 1669<sup>3</sup> compensation for injuries was paid to several workmen employed in the quarries and in transport, and on the building of the Louvre. The two enormous stones of the pediment were quarried at Meudon by Michel Rigalleau and Simon du Costé.<sup>4</sup> The masons who cut the stones were Mouton, Potery, De Baure, and others,<sup>5</sup> and the carpenter who constructed the machinery for hoisting was named Ponce Cliquin, who received for his work 2,200 francs,<sup>6</sup> the widow Fleury receiving 1,684 francs 8 sous for supplying the ropes. The total cost of transport, cutting the pediment stones on the site and placing them in position,<sup>7</sup> came to 25,000 francs. Altogether it was one of the most remarkable feats of building construction carried out in France in the seventeenth century.

Few buildings have made a greater sensation or aroused more

<sup>1</sup> In a note to "Vitruvius," bk. x, chap. v, p. 307, Perrault describes the crane in use in his time, and an invention of his own for raising loads. In Leclerc's view the machinery for moving is shown in the foreground, and the hoisting, together with cranes and scaffolding, in the distance. Perrault does not refer to Fontana's work on the methods he used for hoisting the great obelisk of the Vatican, published in 1590, but he might have got some useful hints from his beautiful plates. There is a detailed account of the construction in Blondel, "Cours d'Architecture," bk. vi, chap. v.

<sup>2</sup> "Comptes," i, 67.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 387.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 546.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 595. They received for this 2,055 francs 16 sous.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 596. Sauval ("Antiquités," vii, 61) says "on auroit peut-être eu bien de l'embaras à les placer entières, sans le secours de l'habile charpentier Ponce Cliquin," and attributes its invention to him.

<sup>7</sup> "Comptes," i, 677. "Pour transporter tailler, et poser les deux grandes pierres de fronton du Louvre," 25,000 francs.



controversy than the "Peristyle" of the Louvre. The profession generally, no doubt instigated by poor Le Vau, were against it. "En général les artistes qui exercent l'architecture endurent difficilement que ceux qui n'en font pas ouvertement leur profession ayent des talens supérieurs."<sup>1</sup> The elder Blondel devoted three chapters of his "Cours d'Architecture," specially prepared for the School of the Academy, to showing that coupled columns standing in a row had no warrant in antiquity, that though an architect of the ability of Hermogenes might introduce innovations which might rank as laws, everybody was not an Hermogenes, and "il faut s'assujétir à certaines règles et arrêter le caprice si l'on veut rétablir la belle architecture" and he concludes with the sneer that Perrault could not have trusted his own argument that the coupled columns gave extra strength, judging by the amount of iron he had lavished on the construction of the Peristyle.<sup>2</sup> François Blondel rested his whole theory of architecture on complete submission to the authority of the ancients as against the moderns, and Perrault was not the man to submit to this arbitrary dogmatism. He replied that the argument proved too much, and on the analogy of other arts and sciences he points out that such a position would shut the door on all progress whatever. As for Blondel's gibes that coupled columns were really inspired by Gothic buildings, he says boldly that he is not prepared to reject motives merely because they may be found in Gothic, that all the best modern masters had used them, and that the ancients would have done so too, if they had ever thought of it. The Academy, who considered the question of coupled columns in 1674, pronounced that the ancients had, in fact, used them whenever necessary for wider openings for light or greater solidity of support. The younger Blondel, one of the best architectural critics that has ever written, though by no means blind to certain technical faults in the

<sup>1</sup> Blondel (J. F.), "Arch. Franc.," iv, 5. The younger Blondel himself considered the East façade of the Louvre "non seulement comme le triomphe de l'architecture et de la sculpture, mais encore comme le chef-d'œuvre de l'art pour la hardiesse de la construction. En effet rien de si régulier que l'ordre d'architecture qui y preside, rien de si intéressant que les membres qui l'accompagnent: point d'ornemens mieux entendus que ceux distribués dans toute cette ordonnance: enfin rien de si magnifique que sa construction: tout y est noble et imposant" ("Cours d'Architecture," iii, 66). Perrault was avenged on his contemporaries, but it took nearly one hundred years to do it.

<sup>2</sup> François Blondel, "Cours d'Architecture," part iii, chaps. x, xi, and xii (2nd ed. 1698), written soon after 1671. Blondel's criticism is a close and keen statement of the case for the authority of the ancients. In order to avoid comparison between the two Blondels, the elder Blondel is always described in the text as François Blondel.







L'ARC DE TRIOMPHE DU TRÔNE. PERRAULT (see p. 84)  
NEVER COMPLETED AND NOW DESTROYED

design, considered the "Peristyle" one of the three or four masterpieces of French architecture,<sup>1</sup> and he considered there was no building in France more capable of inspiring "le bon goût de l'architecture." Its most serious fault, in his opinion, was the insignificance of the main entrance in relation to the rest of the façade, and he suggests that this should have been set in the middle of a grand external staircase, leading to the loggia on the first floor, in the manner of the staircases at Fontainebleau, Meudon, and the Château Neuf at S. Germain-en-Laye. The design, however, that he made for this himself is not very convincing.<sup>2</sup> The most remarkable thing about Perrault's design is its originality, and in a way its individuality. We are now so used to this manner that we are apt to take it for granted, but at the date in question nothing like it had been done, and a comparison of Perrault's design with the designs of Le Mercier, Le Vau, and the elder Marot, for the completion of the Louvre, proves that Perrault turned his back on precedent, and went right away on his own, and this is the really conclusive proof that he was, in fact, the author of the design. Twenty-five years after it was built, and two years after the death of Perrault,<sup>3</sup> D'Orbay made a dastardly attempt to claim the design for Le Vau, and Boileau availed himself of this treacherous attack in his controversy with Charles Perrault. The evidence is overwhelming that Claude Perrault was the designer. He was recognized officially as the architect in all the authoritative engravings. When the Louvre was discussed at the Academy Conferences the reference was always to Perrault, never to Le Vau, and though it is not clear that Perrault was ever a member, he used to consult the Academy on points of design on his buildings at the Louvre.<sup>4</sup> Blondel unhesitatingly assigned the design to Perrault on contemporary testimony and of his own knowledge; but the really convincing proof is the internal evidence of the design itself. As pointed out by Patte, it was impossible that the designs for the Peristyle and the Arc de Triomphe du Trône could have been made by the architect who designed Vaux le Vicomte, the Hôtel Lambert, and the Collège des Quatre Nations. "Il seroit même difficile de trouver deux manières de traiter l'architecture plus opposées.

<sup>1</sup> Blondel, "Arch. Franc.," iv, 5, note 6. He ranked it with the Porte S. Denis, Maisons, and the Val de Grâce.

<sup>2</sup> See Blondel (J. F.), "Cours d'Architecture," iii, 64-73.

<sup>3</sup> Claude Perrault died in 1688.

<sup>4</sup> *E.g.*, in 1678 he submitted two designs for attic storeys to the end pavilions of the façade to the consideration of the Academy.



Autant M. Le Vau est lourd dans ses proportions générales, et mesquin dans ses profils, autant M. Perrault est élégant, noble, pur dans les détails comme dans l'ordonnance de ces édifices."

The Louvre was never finished. In less than ten years from the start Versailles had won the day. In 1674 the total expenditure on the Louvre and Tuileries was 65,500 francs; that on Versailles was 539,700 francs. In 1678 the estimated expenditure on Versailles was 2,371,346 francs, and the actual expenditure on the Louvre and Tuileries, 16,997 francs. The river front was not completed, and most of the building was left without a roof. Sums set aside for the completion of the Louvre were diverted elsewhere. In 1679<sup>1</sup> 300,000 francs were assigned for the continuation of the work at the Louvre. The sum actually expended was a little under 14,000 francs. In 1678 20,000 francs were set aside for the sculpture of the Louvre, but it was not spent, the stone was left in block, the buildings became almost ruinous, and M. Guiffrey says that under Cardinal Fleury the total removal of the buildings was seriously contemplated by way of economy, and the Louvre was nearly sharing the fate of the Château de Madrid and the Chapel of the Valois. Finally, after seventy-five years of complete neglect, Marigny had compassion on it, and in 1755 the building was partially completed by Jacques Ange Gabriel and finished by Soufflot. Even under François I it would be difficult to find a more signal instance of the reckless caprice and improvidence of the French kings.

Lance, "Dict. des Architectes Français," *s.v.* Perrault, has a foolish note, assigning the design to Le Vau, and relying on the evidence of D'Orbay and Boileau, and on a print by Henrisset, which has an inscription, "ce chef-d'œuvre d'architecture fut commencé, quant aux fondations en 1663 sur des dessins du Cavalier Bernini, Louis Le Vau auquel en est redevable de se superbe edifice en commença les travaux en 1667. François D'Orbay, son élève, contribua beaucoup a sa perfection en ayant la conduite après la mort de son maître." Lance had even the impudence to talk of Perrault as "un architecte pour rire." Lance's criticism is as worthless as his evidence. Bernini's works were begun in 1665, not in 1667, and Le Vau died in 1670, by which time the work was practically finished. Henrisset was an engraver of the early part of the eighteenth century, and of no authority whatever in comparison with Jean Marot. Lance omitted in the evidence of his contention the statement of Sauval that the works begun at the Louvre in 1667 and carried on "à present en 1670," were conducted "par les soins et sur les desseins<sup>2</sup> de Louis Le Vau," and that to him and D'Orbay, "on doit attribuer toute la gloire du dessein, et de l'exécution de ce superbe edifice, malgré tout ce que l'on a publié de contraire." Sauval was an antiquary who collected information and gossip on every hand. His voluminous notes were left in MS., and were not published till 1724, long after his death. His information in this case was wrong all round; the work was begun in 1665, not 1667, and the evidence is con-

<sup>1</sup> "Comptes," i, 1116-1124.

<sup>2</sup> "Antiquités," vii, 62.

clusive that the designs were made by Perrault, who was an admirable draughtsman. Sauval may have confused these designs with the earlier designs by Le Vau, which were abandoned, or he may have got his information from D'Orbay himself, but the whole passage looks like a later insertion. In 1670 Perrault was unquestionably recognized as the author of the design. Boileau admitted to Charles Perrault in 1700 that he had been mistaken, and that he regretted his mistake. "Le dépit de se voir critiqué lui avoit fait dire des choses qu'il seroit mieux de n'avoir pas dit." (See Blondel, "Arch. Franc.," iv, 3, note 6.)



## CHAPTER VII

CLAUDE PERRAULT. FRANÇOIS BLONDEL

CLAUDE PERRAULT for a time carried all before him. From 1665 onwards he was engaged at the Louvre. In 1667 he was employed to design the Observatory, and very soon afterwards the Arc de Triomphe du Trône in the Faubourg S. Antoine. Cassini, La Hire, and all the expert astronomers of Paris were called in to settle precisely the site of the Observatory, and the building was begun in 1667,<sup>1</sup> and finished in 1672. It is a very plain building, and Perrault seems to have been determined to show that if he could be magnificent at the Louvre, he was also capable of the most austere simplicity in a building required solely for scientific purposes. The plan is a rectangle about 96 feet by 84 feet with octagonal towers engaged at the south-east and south-west angles, and a rectangular projection on the north and south sides. The elevations are kept severely plain. There are no rustications or pilasters, plain string-courses only above the basement and first floor, with a simple entablature, a sort of attic with a flat roof and a balustrade.<sup>2</sup> In spite of professional jealousies this building was actually completed, but it is not attractive. The semicircular openings conflict with the rectangularity of the building, and the attempt at strict utilitarianism on which science, as usual, insisted, only resulted in ugliness. To compensate for this restraint, Perrault indulged himself in the most lavish ornament in the famous Arc de Triomphe du Trône in the Faubourg S. Antoine. The monument was to celebrate the

<sup>1</sup> Blondel, "Arch. Franc.," ii, 57. The first entry of payment both for this and the Arc de Triomphe does not occur till 1669.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 61, says that at one time a wooden tower, 120 feet high, stood on this flat, used for astronomical observations. This tower had originally formed part of the machine of Marly. The height given for the building itself is 81 feet.

King's victories in Flanders and la Franche-Comtè in 1666-1667. A competition was again held between Le Vau, Le Brun, and Claude Perrault, and as usual several designs were sent in by other architects uninvited. Perrault was again successful, and the work proceeded intermittently from 1668 to 1680. As designed by Perrault this monument was to consist of a principal arch 25 feet wide and 50 feet high, with smaller archways on either side 15 feet wide separated by coupled composite columns on pedestals. Above the entablature was an attic storey, and over the centre bay a pedestal for an equestrian statue of the King. The total width was to be 146 feet exclusive of the side columns, and the height to the top of the figure 150 feet.<sup>1</sup> It was thus considerably larger than the arches of Constantine and Septimius Severus, and than Blondel's Porte S. Denis and Bullet's Porte S. Martin. It appears from the "Comptes" that the arch was begun in 1668 and carried steadily forward till 1671, by which year 311,547 francs had been spent on it, and the work was carried up as far as the top of the pedestals of the columns. Nothing was done in 1672, and it seems that the design was already called in question, for the City had the work carried on in plaster in order to judge of the effect, and the expenditure dropped suddenly from over 100,000 francs in 1671 to 19,185 in 1673. The work struggled on till 1680, when it was finally stopped, but early in 1685 Louvois took the matter up again and referred Perrault's design to the Academy of Architecture, with instructions to them to consider what could be done with the part already built, and whether this could be used with an altered design.<sup>2</sup> Apparently Perrault was ignored absolutely. The Academy, with its customary assiduity, and in particular Gittard, set about preparing designs of its own, and in July 1685 reported on Perrault's design very unfavourably. The central arch, they said, was too narrow (though a foot wider than Blondel's at S. Denis), the side arches were too crowded, and on the other hand were not sufficiently linked up with the central arch; there were too many columns, and their projection concealed the medallions; the medallions themselves were unsuitable for a work of this sort,

<sup>1</sup> Blondel (J. F.), "Cours d'Architecture," ii, 106-109. These dimensions do not agree with the illustration, which shows 125 feet to the top of the pedestal under the figure, the width out to out of pedestal scales 168 feet. Blondel says the town of Paris had the full-sized model carried out in plaster in 1670, but this does not tally with the "Comptes." See also the extract from the "Notes et Dessins de Claude Perrault," App. V, in Bonnefon's edition of Perrault's "Mémoires."

<sup>2</sup> "Procès-Verbaux de l'Académie Royale d'Architecture," ii, 70, 71, 97.



which being dedicated to Immortality, "ne veut rien que de grand et de fort." There was too much ornament altogether; an arc de Triomphe should be an arc de Triomphe, "il suffit que ce soit un grand arc solidement construit"; and lastly, the finish at the top (*amortissement*) was unsuitable, because it seemed to subordinate the arch to the figure instead of the figure to the arch. Considering that the figure was the figure of Louis XIV, and the triumphal arch was put up in honour of Louis XIV, one would have thought it only reasonable to lead up to the figure as Perrault did in his design, but the whole criticism was prejudiced and malicious, and reflects little credit on the Academy of Architecture. That body was invited to advise on the work of a colleague, a colleague moreover whom they knew to be out of favour with the all-powerful minister. Instead of trying to help him in adversity, they damned his design and submitted designs of their own, and the explanation is at once apparent in the names of the members of the Academy who signed this report: François Blondel, his bitter antagonist and rival; Bullet, a pupil and assistant of Blondel, and a rival in the design of triumphal arches; Gittard, and D'Orbay, his lifelong enemy. Fifteen years before, when Perrault was in the full flood of his prosperity, the obsequious François Blondel had dwelt on the "construction admirable" of this same Arc de Triomphe "qui doit surpasser tout ce qui a jamais esté fait en cette manière par la grandeur et la magnificence de l'ouvrage et par l'excellence du travail."<sup>1</sup> One is glad to know that none of these rival designs were ever carried out. The plaster archway became more and more ruinous and disreputable, and was finally destroyed by order of the Regent in 1716. Piganiol de la Force<sup>2</sup> says the foundations were so solid that great difficulty was found in removing them. Perrault had formed them with great stones 6 feet thick, laid dry. He had then by means of a "machine admirable" of his own invention, hung the next course of stones over these, and set them in motion before finally fixing, the friction with the help of water forming a sort of mastic which united the courses in one solid and homogeneous mass. The workmen were unable to remove the stones by courses and had to break them up.

The death of Colbert in 1683 left Perrault forgotten by the Court and exposed to the intrigues of his enemies. His brother Charles had

<sup>1</sup> Blondel's opening address to the Academy of Architecture, December 1671.

<sup>2</sup> The "Trône" referred to was a superb Throne set up near the site on the occasion of the entry of Louis XIV and Maria Theresa into Paris in 1660 ("Desc. Hist. de la Ville de Paris," v, 76-78).

already retired from the service of Colbert, and nothing but hostility was to be looked for from the new Minister, "François Michel Le Tellier, Marquis de Louvois et de Courtanvaux, Conseiller du Roy en tous ses Conseils, secrétaire d'Etat et du commandemens de Sa Majesté, Chancelier de ses ordres, Surintendant et ordonnateur général de ses bastimens et jardins, tapisseries, arts et manufactures de France."<sup>1</sup> Le Brun, once all-powerful, went down in the débâcle, and Perrault abandoned all further effort in architecture, and devoted the few remaining years of his life to scientific research. His brother Charles was deprived of the appointment of "contrôleur général alternatif des bâtimens" with a salary of some 6,500 francs a year, which he had held since 1672, and the place was given to the Sr. Hardouin, probably an uncle of Mansart.<sup>2</sup> The official connection of the Perraults with the royal buildings was thus definitely terminated. Claude Perrault was allowed to retain a pension of 2,000 francs granted him in 1667, and described in the grant of 1670 as made to him "en considération de son mérite et de la profonde connaissance qu'il a de la Physique."<sup>3</sup> Another pension of 2,000 francs granted "au Sr. Perrault en consideration de son application aux belles lettres" in 1667 was discontinued in 1684. It is not quite clear to which of the Perraults this refers. Guiffrey takes it to have been Charles Perrault, the Secretary and not the architect. The fact was that it was almost impossible for an honest and independent man to stay the course at the Court of Louis XIV. If the King did not take some sudden caprice into his head, his habit of leaning on one all-powerful minister left everybody else at the mercy of that minister, and though in the days of Colbert the evils that might have resulted were tempered by that statesman's sagacity and genuine patriotism, every sort of abuse crept in under the regime of Louvois, "cet homme si considerable," according to Mme. de Sevigné;<sup>4</sup> "ce

<sup>1</sup> "Comptes," 1684. The first entry among the "officers qui ont gages" is "Au Sr. Le Brun . . . partant cy néant." Certain arrears were, however, paid him, and in 1687 he managed to struggle back into partial favour.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 566.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 449. Claude Perrault received payments from time to time for his designs; e.g. in 1667 he receives 2,000 francs; in 1671 4,000 francs for his services in architecture in 1669-70, but he was never an "architecte du Roi," and it is almost certain that he was not a member of the Academy of Architecture, though he was a prominent member of the Académie des Sciences. A François Perrault, "griffier de l'écritoire" (elsewhere this is "Griffier des Bâtimens") and his son Jean, "expert toiseur des Bâtimens" may have been related, but Charles Perrault makes no reference to them in his "Mémoires."

<sup>4</sup> Letter to M. de Coulanges, July 1691.



pernicieux ministre" in the caustic criticism of Saint-Simon. Only the supple and unscrupulous were able to maintain their place at Court.

Claude Perrault died in 1688 of blood poisoning caught at the dissection of a camel in the Académie des Sciences. Owing to the harsh action of Colbert<sup>1</sup> in the last sixteen years of his life he was seriously embarrassed and few men have suffered more than Perrault from calumny and intrigue. Even his admirers have felt it necessary to defend him as an amateur in architecture. Yet in fact Perrault was not an amateur, and was one of the most accomplished all-round Frenchmen of his time. Born in 1613, the son of a Parliamentary lawyer, and a doctor by profession, thoroughly trained in the science of his time, he was no mere scientific specialist, but by temperament and education a real humanist. His edition of Vitruvius is not only a learned and scholarly work, and much the best interpretation of that obscure writer issued up to that date, it was also a valuable essay in criticism.<sup>2</sup> His brother Charles says that he was an excellent draughtsman,<sup>3</sup> and though he had never been trained as a professional architect, he had certainly studied the art closely. The extent of knowledge and grasp of the subject shown in his Vitruvius, are beyond the reach of the amateur, and his knowledge of mechanism and applied science was admitted by everyone, and was shown in a remarkable manner in the building of the Louvre.<sup>4</sup> His attainments were on a different level from those of the intelligent patron such as Lord Burlington, who kept his private architect in his house, or even of more capable amateurs such as Aldrich, Dean of Christchurch. The right comparison is not with such men as these, or with those eminent painters such as Le Brun who have ventured on architecture, but have usually had to rely on their builder or

<sup>1</sup> The "Perrault Mémoires," 118-127. As Receiver-General, 1654-64, Claude Perrault had advanced some 400,000 francs, relying for his reimbursement on the balance due on the taxes which fell to the Receiver-General. But Louis XIV remitted this balance in 1664, and Perrault, faced with a loss of 400,000 francs, paid off some of his creditors out of money due to the Treasury, and was unable to meet Colbert's demand for payment in full. He was dismissed from his post, and Colbert, though an old friend, refused to listen to his appeals: "M. Colbert eu la dureté de les lui refuser et le laissa mourir sans lui faire raison de la moindre chose."

<sup>2</sup> I return to this in the chapter following in dealing with the writings of François Blondel.

<sup>3</sup> See the freehand sketches in the "Voyage à Bordeaux," ed. P. Bonnefon.

<sup>4</sup> J. F. Blondel refers to his method of dealing with rainwater by means of vertical conduits formed in the thickness of the walls, instead of pipes on the surface, and to the reservoir as a protection against fire at the back of the pediment of the Louvre. A mere amateur would never have gone so closely into detail.





LA PORTE S.<sup>t</sup> ANTHOINE fut bâtie l'an 1585. sous le Règne de Henry 3.<sup>e</sup> ornée de Deuxes, dorées &c. Pour l'entrée de la Reine Marie Theresz Espouse de Louis 14.<sup>e</sup> l'an 1660. enfin embellie et augmentée en 1671 de deux autres Portes, d'une avenue, et d'un agreable Jardin qui est à côté.

[Perelle

PORTE S. ANTOINE AS ALTERED BY F. BLONDEL (see p. 91)



[Perelle

PORTE S. DENIS. F. BLONDEL (see p. 93)





an architectural ghost, but with Sir Christopher Wren. Wren and Perrault came from much the same class in society. Both were men of quite exceptional ability, educated to the fullest extent then possible. Both were men of a curious habit of mind, keenly interested in science and its practical application, and both approached architecture from the point of view of the physicist and the inventor rather than that of the artist. Perrault never reached the extraordinary attainment of Wren, the reason being that whereas Wren took up architecture as a young man fresh from his university honours, Perrault did not make his first venture in design till he was fifty-two. He suffered, moreover, from the nemesis of his brother's intrigues, in that his opportunity was short-lived, and failed him before his powers as a designer were matured and tempered by actual experience of building. The professional jealousies of the time of Louis XIV are the least satisfactory feature in an otherwise splendid period of architecture. In the case of Perrault, they were embittered by the fact that he was not a professional architect, and by the suspicions sometimes entertained by artists towards men who in addition to practising their art are able to write about it with reasonable intelligence and in adequate prose. The curious thing is, that at the time, Perrault was not the only example of men undertaking architecture who were not trained as architects, and that his most serious rival had won his spurs not as an architect but as a mathematician. François Blondel and Philippe La Hire, who were mathematicians and astronomers, were quite as much amateurs in architecture as Claude Perrault, and inferior to him in powers of design. Indeed it is doubtful if La Hire, professor of architecture as he was, ever designed anything.

François Blondel was almost an exact contemporary of Perrault. He was, like the latter, the son of a lawyer, and was born in 1618. In 1647 he is found in command of a royal galley, "La Cardinale."<sup>1</sup> From 1652 to 1655 he acted as travelling tutor to the son of Mr. Secretary Lomenie de Brienne. Their tour took them through Holland, Scandinavia, Prussia, Bohemia, Moravia, the Palatinate, Austria, Bavaria, and Italy, including Rome. On his return he was appointed Professor of Mathematics at the Collège Royal. In 1657 he was sent on a diplomatic mission to Berlin, proceeding from there to Constantinople and Egypt,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Lemonnier, "Procès-Verbaux de l'Académie Royale d'Architecture," i, xxii-xxxi.

<sup>2</sup> François Blondel, "Cours d'Architecture," part v, p. 666. Blondel says he was at Constantinople in 1659, and made a sketch of a famous aqueduct seven miles out, but that he was robbed of this and several other sketches.



and returning by way of Italy, and there is no doubt that it was during these journeys that he picked up his unusually wide knowledge of the buildings of antiquity. His next employment was as an engineer. In 1664 he was ordered to inspect the harbours on the West Coast of France, with a view to their development and enlargement, and apparently also to undertake any necessary public works, for in 1665 he repaired the bridges and the Roman arch at Saintes, and drew up a scheme of fortification for the islands of Ré and Oleron. Blondel's work at Saintes was characteristic of the man in the conscientious thoroughness of its construction. His methods were very different from the arrogant incapacity with which J. H. Mansart undertook to design the bridge at Moulins, forty years later, and they are worth noting. He found on examination of the ruined bridge at Saintes, that the river bed had been washed away round the piles on which the old bridge was built. He therefore made trial borings, going down, he says, to sixty feet, by means of socketed iron rods. Finding a good clay below the upper stratum he went down 7 feet below the bed of the river, laid a grille of oak beams 12 to 14 inches thick, laid in squares and halved,<sup>1</sup> right across the river, and about 30 feet wide, filling in the empty squares of the grille with stones set in mortar. On the top of this he placed "une forte platteforme" made of oak planks<sup>2</sup> or sleepers 5 inches to 6 inches thick, and bolted down to the grille below, and on this he built "un corps de bonne maçonnerie" 5 feet high, so that the whole foundation was one solid mass. In its construction, he took special care that all the work was carried up together, and that all facings, quoins and angles were made with large stones cramped together with iron. The top of the foundation was only a little below the bed of the river. On this he built the piers up to the impost of the arches, and then left them for a whole winter to take their bearings, after which the rest was built according to "les regles ordinaires de l'architecture." Blondel's bridge stood till it was pulled down in 1845, J. H. Mansart's was washed away within five years of its construction. In 1666 he prepared plans with Clerville, an engineer, for the new harbour and arsenal of Rochfort,<sup>3</sup> and later in

<sup>1</sup> "A queue d'aronde," literally "swallow-tailed." Daviler defines this as cutting the butt ends of two planks with a triangular cut in order to join them.

<sup>2</sup> "Madriers."

<sup>3</sup> See "Cours d'Architecture," part 5, bk. i, chap. xiii and xiv, for an account of his work along the west coast of France from Dunquerque down to Bayonne, and of his buildings at Rochfort. The town dates from the year 1666. D'Orbay appears to have been

that year was sent on a mission to the Antilles to investigate positions for fortresses in those islands. He was ennobled in 1669 as the Seigneur de Croiselles et de Gaillardon, and appointed a member of the Academy of Science. In 1671 he became the director of the Academy of Architecture, and drafted a scheme for its organization which seems to have been superior in every way to that of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture, and in this year Colbert entrusted his son, the Marquis de Seignelay, to the care of Blondel and Mignard, the architect, for a tour in Italy, and in doing so was careful to instruct<sup>1</sup> his son to study the arts in order to qualify himself for succession to the charge of Surintendant des Bâtiments "qui lui donnera divers avantages auprès du Roi." It was apparently on his return from this tour in 1672 that Blondel was appointed tutor to the Dauphin.

So far, and excepting his work at Saintes and Rochfort, Blondel had done no architectural work, and he was actually fifty-two, the same age as Claude Perrault, when he made his first essay in original architecture. It appears that at some time prior to 1670 Blondel prepared a general scheme for the improvement of Paris, which was approved by the King and deposited at the Hôtel de Ville for future reference, and it was in pursuance of this scheme that in 1670 he altered the Porte S. Bernard. The work, as he describes it himself, both here and at the Porte S. Antoine, was "un rabillage et un rajustement."<sup>2</sup> At the Porte S. Bernard certain old rooms had to be preserved in the existing gateway, and he therefore designed two arches instead of one or the three which he would have preferred himself. His design was top-heavy, and seems to have been criticized unfavourably, and indeed it was impossible to make any satisfactory composition of two precisely similar arches placed side by side, but the self-esteem of François Blondel was equal to anything, and he complacently remarks of his design "ce qui a assez bien reussi . . . au moins au goust de ceux qui scavent quelque chose de plus que le vulgaire."<sup>3</sup> His next work was the Porte S. Antoine in 1672. This gateway had some very fine reliefs of rivers by Goujon on its outer façade,<sup>4</sup> and some famous vaulting inside the arch. Blondel, in order to preserve this intact, added new archways on either side of in charge of the work there. In chap. xv Blondel describes at length his work on the bridge over the Charente at Saintes.

<sup>1</sup> See "Correspondance des Directeurs de l'Académie de France a Rome," i, 29.

<sup>2</sup> See "Cours d'Architecture," bk. xii, which is entirely devoted to a description of his own work in Paris.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 615.

<sup>4</sup> "Qu'il auroit esté cruel de détruire" (Blondel, "Cours d'Architecture," p. 604).



it with a Doric entablature and an attic storey, with obelisks at the angles. For all these gateways, and, according to his own account, for all the public buildings in Paris, Blondel composed the inscriptions in Latin, and he was so proud of this that he devoted a whole chapter to a digression on these inscriptions. That on the Porte S. Martin was typical:

Ludovico Magno  
Quod Limburgo Capto  
Impotētes hostium minas  
Ubique repressit  
Præf. et Ædil Poni  
CC  
Anno R.S.H. MDCLXXV.<sup>1</sup>

As one of his excuses for using Latin rather than French Blondel remarked: "Peutestre que je me suis gâté le gout par la lecture un peu fréquente de Cicéron, de Virgile, d'Horace ou de Terence." François Blondel was, no doubt, a very competent scholar, but he certainly lacked urbanity. These remarks were made at lectures delivered in the presence of his colleagues, who, as Blondel was well aware, knew no Latin, and admitted that they were unable to read Vitruvius till Perrault had translated him. In all his lectures and addresses, able as they often were, François Blondel assumed a superior and indeed extremely arrogant position. He never allowed his audience to forget that he was not only Director of the Academy of Architecture and a member of the Académie des Sciences,<sup>2</sup> but a great personage in his own right. In spite, however, of his faults of manner, Blondel's lectures in the school of architecture were remarkable both in form and substance, and unless Claude Perrault was a member, nobody else in the Academy could have produced anything approaching them.

Blondel's masterpiece was the Porte S. Denis, built in 1673. He says that in designing this he relied on justice of proportion rather than ornament. The design is extremely simple, a rectangular façade, 72 feet high by 72 feet wide, with a semicircular arch in the centre 24 feet wide, flanked by pyramids (or rather obelisks very wide at the base) attached to the walls and decorated with trophies. Much against his will, Blondel was compelled by the city authorities to form two door-

<sup>1</sup> Blondel explains that R.S.H. is "reparatae salutis humanæ." "Poni curavere" is doubtful Latin, but there is the true Roman spirit in Blondel's fine sonorous dedications. Voltaire also held that Latin, rather than French, was the right language for inscriptions.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Perrault says that it was on his recommendation that Blondel was admitted to the Académie des Sciences in 1669.

ways in the pedestals of these pyramids, but he comforts himself by reference to a similar treatment in the dream of Poliphilus.<sup>1</sup> Girardon and Anguier were the sculptors. Owing to the manner in which it is now hemmed in by houses and streets, it is difficult to judge the value of the design. It is lost in its present incongruous and rather sordid surroundings, but when it was one of the principal entrances into Paris, for which purpose it was designed, and could be seen from the right point of view, it must have had a fine effect from without, and good judges, such as the younger Blondel, considered it to rank among the finest monuments in the whole range of French architecture. The Porte S. Denis appears to have terminated François Blondel's career as a practising architect. He spent the remainder of his life in directing the Academy, lecturing in its school and composing various technical works. From 1671 onwards he drew 2,000 francs per annum "en consideration de la parfaite connaissance qu'il a des mathématiques et de son assiduité aux conférences de l'Académie des Sciences."<sup>2</sup> This salary was reduced to 1,500 francs in 1672, but in that year he was granted a salary of 1,200 francs as professor of architecture in the newly-established Academy "pour y tenir les conférences d'architecture, et l'enseigner publiquement."<sup>3</sup> The last payments were made him in 1685, and Blondel died in the year following. François Blondel's works were almost entirely technical. His first venture was "L'Architecture Française" (1664),<sup>4</sup> an edition of the work of a certain Louis Savot, first printed in 1624 (?), giving practical hints on domestic buildings, to which Blondel added some notes on the Custom of Paris. In 1673 he issued a superb folio,<sup>5</sup> entitled "Résolutions des quatre principaux problèmes d'Architecture," but it is a disappointing treatise, and merely gives geometrical methods of setting out the entasis and diminutions of columns, *arcs rampans* (that is, elliptical arches on the rake, such as those under flying

<sup>1</sup> The "Hypnerotomachia" is a curious authority for an architect to rely on, but Blondel refers to it more than once.

<sup>2</sup> "Comptes," i, 565.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 657. Later on his salary was included in the lump sum allotted to the Academy, and allowing 500 francs sent to each of the five other members this salary must have been reduced by 1685, when the total was only 3,377 francs.

<sup>4</sup> 2nd ed., 1685. This is wrongly given as a separate work by Blondel in M. Lemonnier's introduction to "Procès-Verbaux de l'Académie Royale d'Architecture," p. xxvi.

<sup>5</sup> The book was dedicated to Colbert, par "M. François Blondel de l'Académie Royale des Sciences, Directeur et Professeur en l'Académie Royale d'Architecture et de Mathématiques au Collège Royale, Maréchal de Camp es armées du Roi et maistre des mathématiques de Monseigneur le Dauphin."



buttresses or flights of stairs), and a method of finding the right section of beams, so that they should be of uniform strength throughout their bearings. With the exception of the last problem, all the rest had been fully dealt with by Abraham Bosse about ten years before<sup>1</sup> (1661), and I incline to think that Blondel's debt to Bosse was a good deal greater than he ever acknowledged. As "*Maréchal es Camps*" he produced "*L'art de jeter les bombes et nouvelle manière de fortifier les places*," but his chief work was his "*Cours d'Architecture*,"<sup>2</sup> a collection of lectures given at the Academy, and the most complete and detailed study of the orders and details of classical architecture as given by Vitruvius, Vignola, Palladio, and Scamozzi that has ever been written. Blondel was a fervent admirer of antiquity and champion of authority. To his mind Gothic architecture was not architecture at all. Under François I the art had had no time to cleanse itself from the rust of ages,<sup>3</sup> it was reserved for Louis XIV to rescue the art "*du mortier et de la truelle*," and the buildings erected for "*cette âme si grande et si noble*" would soon efface the memory of the most renowned buildings of antiquity. The point of view is notable and characteristic. The contempt for "*the trowel and mortar*" is ominous of that indifference to material and reliance on the drawing board which has gone far to ruin modern French architecture, and one comes point blank on to the grovelling toadyism which did so much to demoralize the art of the time. According to Blondel, the end of all architecture was to immortalize the King. In the preface to the "*Resolutions des quatre principaux problèmes*," he insists that this admirable art will do more to eternalize the memory of Louis Le Grand than all the other arts that promise immortality. Blondel took his cue from Colbert, and this was the accepted position among all the artists of Louis XIV. One looks in vain in these official utterances for a generous appreciation of all fine architecture wherever found and by whoever done. The egotism of the King overshadowed the whole art of his time and cramped the originality of some of its ablest artists. Men of independent minds, such as Claude Perrault, soon fell out of favour; the only road to success was unremitting flattery and intrigue, and in the end Blondel himself succeeded no better than Perrault. Blondel starts with the axiom that

<sup>1</sup> "*Traité des manières de dessiner les ordres de l'Architecture antique en toutes leurs Parties*." The first edition was issued in 1664, but with this edition is included "*Représentations Geometriales*" of various doorways first published in 1659. The 2nd ed. is dated 1688.

<sup>2</sup> 1st ed., 1672; 2nd ed., 1698.

<sup>3</sup> "*De se nettoyer de la rouille qu'elle avoit contractée sous terre*."

"l'architecture est l'art de bien bâtir," but except for insisting quite late in the "Cours" on the necessity of good foundations, with some very interesting details of his own works in bridge building, he says little about building. He deals with staircases at some length, but makes no reference to those great open well staircases, such as that of the Hôtel Dieu at Laon, which came into use at the end of the seventeenth century, and which showed that the French masons were still the best in the world, and that there was no problem in stone-cutting beyond their capacity. Blondel, in fact, wrote almost exclusively from a theoretical standpoint, and even from the narrow standpoint of abstract mathematics. "La pratique" meant for him not so much practical building as the technique of the details of Roman architecture. He devoted himself almost exclusively to the decoration of façades as "la plus noble et la plus considérable" element of architecture. His account is interminably minute; each detail of the order is dissected and its exact numerical proportions given according to the principal authorities. These rules, he says, should be generally adhered to: "Il faut qu'un architecte ait le jugement de sçavoir se contenir dans certaines bornes pour ne rien produire d'extravagant," otherwise he will land himself "dans le goût Gothique." Blondel held that the proportions of the orders were a law of nature. Following Alberti, he says that in buildings "Il y a naturellement quelque chose d'excellent et de parfait qui nous surprend, qui excite notre âme, et qui se fait sentir aussitôt."<sup>1</sup> That this "je ne sçai quoi," as he calls it elsewhere, is as real as the beauty of a woman, and its arrangement and relations cannot be altered without injury. He describes this quality as a harmony, symmetry, grace, "gentillesse et correspondance" (*concinntas*)—intimately bound up with our reason and our soul, and in fact the governing principle of the Universe. He states that this principle is found in music,<sup>2</sup> as well as in buildings, illustrates it by Palladio's designs, and shows in detail the mathematical and geometrical schemes on which the Pantheon was designed. Blondel nowhere refers to Plato, but his philosophy of art, such as it is, is based on a garbled version of the Platonic Idea. Some people, he says, deny that there is such a thing as "beauté réelle dans la nature," and that beauty is only a matter of association, and of what pleases the majority, but for himself he holds that there exists a "natural" beauty which is recognized as such immediately, that the

<sup>1</sup> "Cours d'Architecture," part v, p. 371.

<sup>2</sup> He discusses at length Ouvrard's "Architecture Harmonique ou l'application de la doctrine des proportions de la Musique à l'Architecture."



pleasure that it gives is permanent and unchangeable, and that though we cannot say that everything that pleases is beautiful, everything that is beautiful pleases "quand il est connu." In all the arts, he argues, including music and dancing, there exists a certain proportion and arrangement of the parts in relation to the whole, which enable us at once to realize certain different sensations, and this realization is the true pleasure. Further, that just as some people take pleasure in hideous discords, and only those who understand music appreciate its harmonies, so there are people who take pleasure in Gothic architecture, and are incapable of adoring "ce mélange harmonieux de parties différentes," which is the essence of classical art. Just as the harmony of music is founded on nature, so symmetry in architecture is agreeable "parce qu'elle a du rapport à notre constitution naturelle." The orders were, therefore, to all intents, to be regarded as sacrosanct, and towards the end of his course he returns to this position with some further arguments of astonishing irrelevance. (a) One of the chief proofs, he asserts, for the absolute existence of proportions, is that they are convincing and necessary, convincing because they are recognized as correct at once, necessary because any alteration would destroy their beauty. (b) All things which tend to preserve life are *nécessairement naturelles*. Buildings preserve life, therefore the qualities of good building, *la commodité*, *la bienséance* and beautiful decoration are laws of nature. (c) The pleasure given by fine cookery,<sup>1</sup> poetry and rhetoric is *naturel*, why then exclude architecture? (d) Details of architecture please us because they resemble works of nature, *e.g.*, a well-proportioned column pleases us because it resembles a tree, "que ne sont jamais plus beaux dans la nature que lorsqu'ils sont droits ronds, et qu'ils diminuent sensiblement," therefore, the proportions of architecture, as handed down from the ancients, constitute "un principe stable et constant," which can be demonstrated mathematically, and is in fact a law of nature.

After this effort Blondel considered he had exhausted the subject, and ended up with a general sneer at his opponents. "Pour moy qui suis dans une perpetuelle deffiance de moy même, je me trouve plus assuré de me conformer aux raisonnements et aux pratiques des plus grands maîtres anciens et modernes, laissant à de l'autres qui se sont par la force de leur génie élevés au dessus du vulgaire, le plaisir qu'ils ont dans la singularité de leurs opinions,"<sup>2</sup> and he then proceeds to

<sup>1</sup> A similar argument was used by a modern critic who asserted that artists were like pastry-cooks, and that their only function was to please.

<sup>2</sup> Part v, p. 719. This from François Blondel, most arrogant of men.

criticize anonymously the proposal to place an equestrian figure 30 feet high on the top of an Arc de Triomphe.<sup>1</sup> The gibe was aimed at Perrault, and the temper displayed by Blondel is that of an exasperated schoolmaster at a loss for further argument. His aesthetic seems to have been devised for the express purpose of attacking Perrault as the champion of free thought and modernism in art. In his first edition of "Vitruvius" Perrault had scandalized the Academic mind by stating bluntly that Beauty had no other foundation than "la fantaisie, qui fait que les choses plaisent selon qu'elles sont conformes à l'idée que chacun a de leur perfection," and that rules were necessary only to form and guide these individual ideas. As for the proportions of the orders which were quoted as a law of nature, Perrault says they have no "beauté positive, nécessaire et convainquante,"<sup>2</sup> et qui surpassit la beauté des autres proportions, comme la beauté d'un diamant surpasse celle d'un caillou," but that they were simply established by the consent of architects who followed each other, and that their authority was simply due to "compagnie et accoustumance." The proportions of the orders were on a different footing from that of harmonics in music, "qui plaisent à causes d'une proportion certaine et immuable qui ne dépend point de la fantaisie," and as evidence of this he referred to the changes which had been made in the Doric order<sup>3</sup> without shocking anybody's reason. Perrault's position is unanswerable as far as it goes, and it was this that roused the persistent and even malicious enmity of Blondel. In a note in his second edition Perrault replied to Blondel's attacks, and remarked bitterly that he had vainly supposed that in view of the prevailing admiration for the ancients, a discussion of their principles might be welcomed, but had learnt that their authority was to be accepted blindly, and that if one wished to avoid being insulted for dealing with architecture at all, the only thing to do was to prepare compilations of Serlio, Palladio, Vignolo, and Scamozzi. Blondel was an excellent engineer, a competent scholar and an accomplished mathematician, but I am unable to find in his writings any trace of that "*intelligence vaste, active*" with

<sup>1</sup> The question arose on the opinion of Vitruvius that figures should be altered according to their distance from the eye. Perrault held that this was wrong, that the eye was rarely deceived, and if it was, commonsense corrected the error. Blondel adhered to Vitruvius, and stated that Perrault's colossal figure did not agree with this theory, to which Perrault replied that he intended his figure to be colossal.

<sup>2</sup> "Vitruvius," pp. 105, 106.

<sup>3</sup> *E.g.* from the five to six diameters of Greek Sicilian temples to the eight of the orthodox Roman.



which he is credited by M. Lemonnier.<sup>1</sup> He was extremely learned in the technique of classical architecture, but though undoubtedly an able man, he was set in his ways, he could not tolerate any deviation from accepted authority, his logic was ridiculous, his aesthetic fantastic. Though he appreciated good architecture he possessed little originality as a designer, and his writings<sup>2</sup> are those of a learned but rather acrimonious pedant. He was untouched by the literary quality and large-minded tolerance which distinguished the writings of Claude and Charles Perrault.

<sup>1</sup> "Procès-Verbaux de l'Académie Royale d'Architecture," i, Introd., p. xxvi.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to those mentioned in the text Blondel published a "Cours de Mathématiques," 1683, a "Histoire du Calendrier Roman," 1682, a "Traité" on the same subject in 1684, a "Comparaison de Pindare et d'Homere," and a "Traité du ressort des montres."

## CHAPTER VIII

### ERRARD, MIGNARD, LA VALFENIÈRE, AND LE PAUTRE

CHARLES ERRARD, to whom I have already referred as the first Director of the French Academy at Rome, was an architect and a painter, but he approached architecture through painting, and though he designed an important church, still standing in Paris, his chief work was done as a decorative painter, and he takes his place in a history of French architecture rather as the first Director of the school at Rome than as an architect, for it was only through his position as Director that he exercised any influence on the architecture of the reign of Louis XIV.

Errard was born at Nantes in 1606. His father was a painter,<sup>1</sup> apparently of some means and position, for he took him to Rome at the age of 18, and got him an introduction to M. le Maréchal de Créqui, Ambassador of the French Court at the Vatican. Under Créqui's patronage and supported by his father, Errard pursued his studies as a draughtsman at Rome for some years, and made there the acquaintance of Roland Fréart de Chambray. On his return from Rome, and after a visit to Nantes, he came to Paris, where he was introduced by de Chambray to François Sublet Desnoyers, Secretary of State and *Surintendant des Bâtiments*. Desnoyers sent him out to Rome again with a pension and the best introductions, and here Errard established his reputation as one of the best draughtsmen in any of the schools. Guillet de S. Georges says, "Il s'appliquoit aussi à l'architecture de sorte que faisant une étude générale de tout ce qui peut mettre en

<sup>1</sup> See the Memoir by Guillet de S. Georges, "Mémoires inédits sur la vie et les ouvrages des membres de l'Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture," i, 73-84. Errard, the father, was summoned from Nantes in 1618, "pour desseigner en peinture de ses (the King's) bastiments" and received for this 1,000 livres, and 200 livres for his lodgement ("Nouvelles Archives," i, 21).



estime un peintre un sculpteur et un architecte, il dessina tous les antiques, bas-reliefs, figures, bustes, édifices anciens et modernes, tous les ouvrages d'ornemens, et fit plus de dessins lui seul, que dix autres n'auriont pu faire, y observant toujours une extrême propreté, et une grande exactitude."<sup>1</sup> He painted a few historical pictures, but his chief study was architectural decoration. Guillet de S. Georges says that he was popular in Roman society. "Il avoit de la prudence, une grande économie, beaucoup de courage, et il montra par plusieurs actions de vigueur qu'il étoit brave de sa personne et fort adroit a l'épée." Desnoyers was so pleased with Errard's progress that on his return to Paris he took him down to his country house at Dangu, near Gisors, and employed him to decorate a gallery and to make drawings of the history of Tobias for some tapestries. Errard selected the cheerful subject of Tobias burying the Jews whose throats had been cut by Sennacherib. While employed at Dangu, Errard met M. Râtabon, chief clerk of the *Surintendance* to Desnoyers, whom he ultimately succeeded in the *Surintendance*, and it was while staying at Dangu that Errard collaborated with Roland Fréart de Chambray in the production of the "Parallel of Ancient and Modern Architecture"<sup>2</sup> and translations of Palladio, and of Leonardo da Vinci's treatises on painting, published in 1650. It was doubtless through the powerful interest of Desnoyers that Errard was awarded a pension of 1,200 francs per annum in 1643, followed in 1644 by the grant of a lodging in the grand gallery of the Louvre in the place of the *stucateurs*, on condition that Errard put the lodging in repair, and spent on it 2,300 livres, up to which amount he was to be indemnified.<sup>3</sup>

In 1646 Errard was employed on certain decorative work at the Palais Royal, and designed for Mazarin the decorations of an opera of Orpheus and Eurydice—"Les decorations en furent magnifiques et entre autres celles d'une salle feinte dont tous les ornemens étoient réhaussés d'or." Errard gave sketch designs for the whole scheme of decoration, including the subject paintings, and both here and at the Louvre and the Tuileries he seems to have played the part of designer-general.

<sup>1</sup> "Mémoires inédits," i, 74. Guillet says that his close study of architecture interfered with his success as a historical painter.

<sup>2</sup> Guillet de S. Georges says that Errard made the drawings for the plates for the *Parallèles*.

<sup>3</sup> "Nouvelles Archives de l'Art Français," 1873, pp. 67-68. Errard managed to retain his right to this lodging in the Louvre till 1684, the year of his resignation of the Directorship of the Academy in Rome. His successor in the lodging was Oppenord, *ébéniste*, father of Gilles Oppenord, the architect.

"C'étoit lui qui donnoit tous les dessins des ouvrage qui se faisoient chez le roi pour la sculpture, la menuiserie, la serrurerie, et généralement pour tout le travail qui dépend du dessin." He was employed in this way at the *petit château* at Versailles, at Fontainebleau and Saint Germain-en-Laye, and also on the splendid ceiling of the Chamber of the Parliament House at Rennes.<sup>1</sup> Coypel, little more than a boy at the time, was his favourite assistant, and the two worked together with much success till Colbert, the new *Surintendant*, brought in Le Brun, and Errard's day as designer-general was over. Le Brun speedily assumed the control of the arts of France, and remained supreme till he in his turn was dispossessed by Mignard after the death of Colbert.

Meanwhile, Errard had taken a very active part in the establishment of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture [1648]. The tyranny of the *Maîtrise* had become intolerable. Although a lodging in the Louvre carried with it certain privileges, it was inadequate as a protection of free artists against the guilds of master painters and sculptors. No one was allowed to practise either art unless he had been apprenticed to a master and submitted a *chef-d'œuvre* to a jury of the "*maîtrise* ès arts de peinture et sculpture." The only exemptions were the Royal servants, those who held a Royal brevet as painter and sculptor, or those who were granted a lodging in the Louvre. These artists not only resented the control exercised by the *Maîtrise*, but had a profound contempt for its capacity. In 1648 the *artistes du Roi* appealed to the King, urging that they should no longer be confounded with "*des barbouilleurs, des marbriers et polisseurs de marbre en une mécanique société*," and that they should be authorized to form an Academy, free from all control by the *Maîtrise*, and in this way be distinguished from people who were only employed "to paint the back door."<sup>2</sup> Their request was granted, the Royal Academy of Painters and Sculptors was founded in 1648, and the *maîtres jurés* were forbidden to interfere with its members under a penalty of 2,000 livres. Among the memorialists for the establishment of the Academy were Le Brun, Charles Errard, Le Sueur, and Guillin, and from the first Errard became the principal man of affairs of the new Academy. It was Errard who in 1648 suggested that members of the Academy should make up the deficit in revenue by equal contributions, and Errard stands next to Le Brun

<sup>1</sup> G. de S. Georges says that the elaborate woodwork of this ceiling was completed in Paris.

<sup>2</sup> "Peindre la porte de la basse cour." See E. Lavisse, "*Histoire de France*," vol. vii, pt. ii, pp. 88-90.



in the list of Academicians.<sup>1</sup> It was on his suggestion that in March 1651 the Academy resolved to verify its privileges, "et de se deffandre contre la persécution des Maîtres Peintres," and Errard was appointed its representative to treat with the master painters and sculptors of the town of Paris. Errard came to certain terms with the *maîtres*, and he was then desired to negotiate with the *jurés* of the master painters and sculptors.<sup>2</sup> In 1651 he and Guillain were appointed Treasurers to the Academy, and in 1653 Errard was elected one of the two "ancients" who presided over their meetings. The quarrels with the *Maîtres* became more and more acrimonious. Up to that date the *Maîtres* sate with the Academicians on the occasion of the admission of new Master-painters or Sculptors. In 1653 the *Maîtres* present at an admission divided the fees among themselves instead of handing them over to the common chest. This action called forth a strong protest from Errard and seven of his colleagues, declaring that such action was "contre tout les forme et par brigue, contre tout droit et raison."<sup>3</sup>

In 1655 Errard with Sarazin, Le Brun, and Bourdon was chosen one of the four Rectors of the Academy, under Ratabon (*Surintendant des Bâtiments*) as Director, and in the year 1656 he volunteered to act

<sup>1</sup> "Procès-Verbaux de l'Académie de Peinture et Sculpture," i, 24. The list, dated 1649, is as follows:

M. Le Brun	M. Mauperché
M. Errard	M. Hance
M. Bourdon	M. Testelin (l'ainé)
M. Perrier	M. Pinagier
M. Beaubrun	M. Le Bicheur
M. Le Sueur	M. Juste d'Egmont
M. de la Hyre	M. Bernard
M. Sarasin	M. Beaubrun (2)
M. Corneille	M. Sève
M. Van Opstal	M. Montangne
M. Guillain	M. Le Nain
M. Guérin	M. Gérard Gosuin
M. Du Guernier	M. Testelin
M. Boulongne	M. Champangne
M. Ferdinande	M. Levesque

For a complete list of the Academy in 1663, see "Procès-Verbaux," ii, 229-230. Eighty-six names are given, and the last but one is "Catherine Duchemin. fe."

<sup>2</sup> See "Procès-Verbaux," i, 45-48.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 85. Henri Testelin, the Secretary, who drew up the "Procès-Verbaux," spelt just as he liked. Colbert first appears as "Colebert—Visce Protecteur" (1661), and in 1662 as M. Coleber.

*ad interim* as a Professor. When the Academy was given a lodgement in the Louvre, Errard designed the necessary alterations.<sup>1</sup> In 1659, owing to the slackness of the Professors, it was stated that the Academy "pouvoit l'anéantir," unless something was done. Errard was in the chair, and it was resolved that the Professors be summoned to appear before the next assembly, and in case of default that the Academy should proceed against them. With Errard were Sarazin, Corneille, and Girardon. Le Brun seldom attended the meetings, and is marked as "absan" in 1659. It is evident that in all its early struggles, Errard was the moving spirit of the Academy, and there were a good many difficulties to be met even within its walls. Thus in March 1659, Errard exhibited to the Academy five pictures of "figures et ornement" made from his designs for presentation to the Chancellor (Seguier).<sup>2</sup> The Academy thanked Errard, ordered that he should be repaid all the money he had advanced, and that any member of the Academy refusing to contribute should be dismissed. In this year Errard lost his place as Rector by lot, but his attendance was invariable, and in 1660 he called attention to an irregularity in the election of Professors, with the result that the last election of the Professors was cancelled, and Errard, Corneille, and Van Opstal were appointed in their place, and on the death of Sarazin, Errard was again elected Rector. In this year the trouble between the Academy and Abraham Bosse, the engraver, came to a head and Errard was deputed "rechercher des moyens de pacification." His researches were unsuccessful, the more so as Errard himself had a grievance against Bosse that the latter had, without acknowledgement, published a treatise on the proportion of figures in the antique, based on Errard's drawings,<sup>3</sup> and Bosse was formally expelled from the Academy in 1661. The Academy was doing badly. In 1662 its students attempted to set up an Academy of their own,<sup>4</sup> and Le Brun and Errard were called in to deal with the situation, but Errard's name does not appear among the Academicians who reported on the affair, and Le Brun had now definitely established that extraordinary supremacy over the arts of France which he maintained till the death of Colbert twenty years later. In 1663 the Academy resolved that Le Brun as "premier Peintre de S.M." should be Chancellor of the Academy for life. Errard's name does not appear among those present when this resolution was

<sup>1</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," i, 135.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 151. "Monseigneur le Chancelier Seguier," d. 1672.

<sup>3</sup> See "Mémoires inédits," i, 78.

<sup>4</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," i, 197.



passed.<sup>1</sup> It is possible that Colbert held Errard responsible for the state of things at the Academy; unfairly as it appears, for the real cause was the slackness of the Academicians themselves, and it is clear from the "Procès-Verbaux" that Errard had throughout endeavoured to keep them up to their work, but Le Brun was now reaping where Errard had sown, and the latter seems to have withdrawn for a time. He was a Rector, however, in 1663, and towards the end of that year resumed his regular attendance. In 1664 he presented the Academy with a copy of his and de Chambray's translations of Leonardo da Vinci and Palladio, and a copy of his own works on antique vases and trophies. Apparently in 1665 he was sent on a roving commission in Flanders to buy statues, busts, and pictures for the King's collection.<sup>2</sup>

In December of this year M. du Metz announced on behalf of "M. Colbert" that the King had decided to grant the money for the maintenance in Rome of students who had won the first and second prizes in the Academy schools, and Errard was appointed the first Director. Errard still attended the Academy till March 1666, when he presented the selected students to the assembled Academy and took formal farewell of his colleagues. "La Compagnie fèsant des vœux pour l'heureux succitz des intansions du Roy en l'establissement de l'Académie a Romme et pour la prospérité du voiage de mond. Sieur Errard, luy a recommandé les estudians qui serontz sous sa direction."<sup>3</sup> Errard left for Rome in June 1666, and, with the exception of the interval from 1673 to 1675 when his friend Noel Coypel was in charge, spent the remainder of his life in Rome, resigning the Directorship in 1684, and dying at Rome in 1689 at the age of eighty-three. He was buried in the Church of S. Louis des François at Rome.<sup>4</sup> The epitaph on the cloisters states that he was Rector of the Academy of Painters and Sculptors in Paris, "Prince" (Director) of the Academy of S. Luke, and President of the Royal Academy in Rome. "Insigni peritiâ, honestate, religione Commendatissimus."

Errard was twice married. His first wife was Marie de la Rüe,

<sup>1</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," i, 216-217. Le Brun acknowledged the compliment by presenting a gold watch in a case of "chagrin" as a prize for the students.

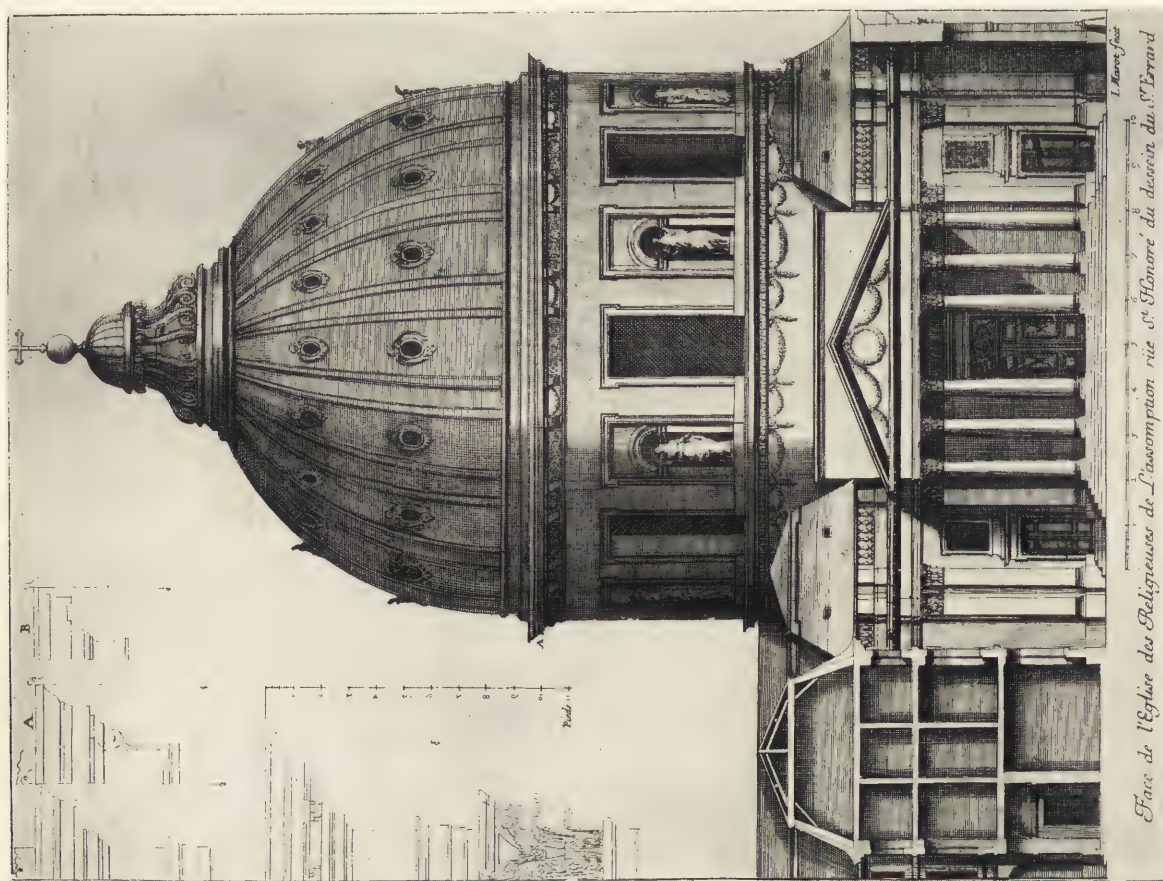
<sup>2</sup> "Comptes," i, 99.

<sup>3</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," i, 301. The Academy resolved that the names of the students selected for the Academy of Rome should be inserted in the Registers. Testelin, who seems to have been a most incompetent secretary, omitted to do this.

<sup>4</sup> A copy of his will, written in his own hand, in Italian, is given in the "Corres. des Directeurs," i, 184-186. His epitaph says that he was eighty-eight in the year of his death, which would make the year of his birth 1601.

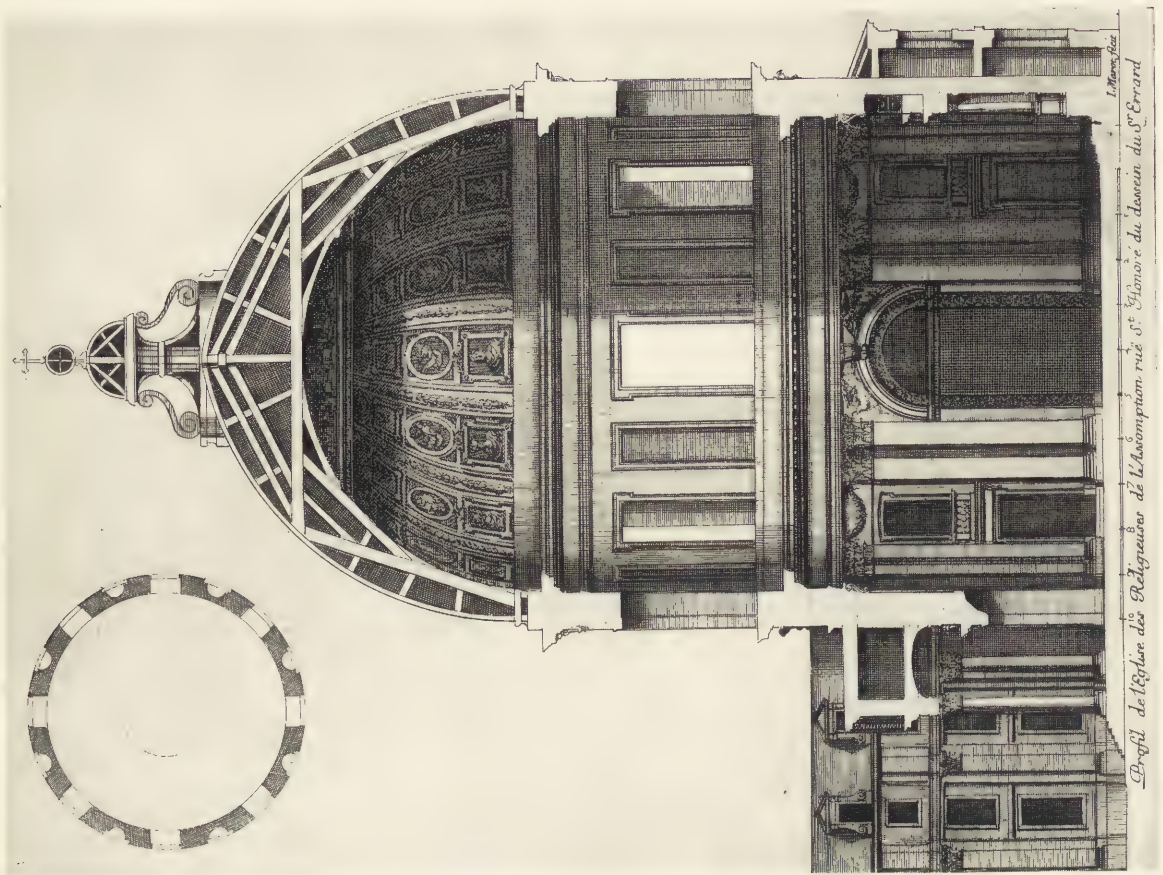






ELEVATION

CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION, PARIS. ERRARD (see p. 106)



SECTION



who in 1657 was godmother to the youngest daughter of Jacques Sarazin, the sculptor, and in 1661 to Antoine, son of Noel Coypel. The relationships are notable. The Academicians, like the *Architectes du Roi*, formed a powerful party, closely related among themselves, and no outsider had much of a chance if he opposed the serried ranks of official art. In 1675 Errard married as his second wife Marie the daughter of Claude Goy, painter, a girl of eighteen years of age, Errard giving his age as sixty, though in fact he was sixty-nine.<sup>1</sup> In the entry of this marriage in the Registers of S. Germain l'Auxerrois, Errard is described as "Peintre, architecte du Roi et Recteur de l'Académie Royale Établie à Paris par S.M." He does not appear in the "Comptes" as an "architecte du Roi," but is so called in this entry and in an entry of the death of his first wife, November 1661, in the Registers of S. Germain l'Auxerrois.<sup>2</sup> Yet beyond his drawings of ornament and buildings in Rome, he does not seem to have received any regular training as an architect, and he made his reputation by considerable decorative works in private as well as Royal houses, and more particularly at the Louvre (1659 to 1660).<sup>3</sup> He was, however, known to be learned in the details of architecture, and for this reason was entrusted with the design of the "église des filles de l'Assumption in the Rue S. Honoré," his one original work. Unfortunately, he was unable to superintend the work himself.<sup>4</sup> The design was made in 1666, the year in which Errard left for Rome, and was carried out by a contractor named Cheret, who introduced some variations of his own. The plan is circular with four recesses with elliptical arches, flanked by pairs of engaged Corinthian pilasters 3 feet 9 inches wide. The drum above the main entablature is plain, lit by eight oblong windows and surmounted by a coffered dome. The interior is quiet and dignified, and the details are good, though the elder Blondel denounced the dome as "tout a fait extravagant aussi bien que le reste de l'édifice."<sup>5</sup> Blondel's chief objection was that there were no frontis-

<sup>1</sup> See "Corres. des Directeurs," i, 56-57. His age is uncertain. If the epitaph is right he must have been seventy-four.

<sup>2</sup> "Monsieur Errard, architecte et peintre ordinaire du Roy et Recteur en son Académie Royale de Peinture et Sculpture," 24 Nov. 1661. Herluisson, "Actes d'État civil des Artistes Français."

<sup>3</sup> Errard had to wait ten years for his money. In July 1669 he received 78,568 francs for the paintings done by him at the Louvre in 1659-1660.

<sup>4</sup> This Church was used after the Revolution as a storehouse for the properties of the Opera. It is now attached to the Church of the Madeleine.

<sup>5</sup> Blondel (J. F.), "Cours d'Architecture," vol. ii, part iv, p. 403.



pieces to build up the composition of the dome outside, a criticism which was unfair and not quite accurate, but the elder Blondel was a bitter critic. He was the enemy of Perrault, he sneered at Errard and ignored the architectural efforts of Le Brun. Other contemporaries pronounced the church to be one of the best in Paris, but the younger Blondel, a far more candid and tolerant critic than his namesake, could find little to say for Errard's design,<sup>1</sup> "ne pouvant dissimuler que la partie supérieure de cet édifice est tout à fait hors de proportion étant lourde, pesante, et d'une forme aussi matérielle que peu ingénieuse," and it must be admitted that the design has several bad faults. The problem set Errard was much the same as that which François Mansart had solved with such skill in the church of Ste. Marie in the Rue S. Antoine, namely, a circular central chapel, with recesses for altars on the axis lines, and a choir for the Sisters opening off one of those recesses. Where Mansart had made actual chapels elliptical in plan, Errard put mere flat recesses, and Errard had no sense of the play of light and shade, the delicate relief and the exquisite proportions which stamp François Mansart's interior with its unrivalled distinction. It was unfortunate for Errard that he could not superintend the execution of his own designs, and it is only fair to attribute certain serious technical defects, both inside and out, to the ignorance of the man who carried out the designs, but this would not explain the faults of the spacing of the openings in the drum, out of all relation to the pilasters below, and on the outside the disproportion of the drum and the dome to the Corinthian frontispiece. The fact was that Errard, though an accomplished man, was not a great artist, but he did play a considerable part in organizing the new Academy of Painting and Sculpture in Paris and the new Académie de France in Rome. "Il avoit de l'esprit, de la probité, un jugement solide. Il étoit ferme dans ses sentiments et les soutenoit avec vigueur. Enfin il a toujours bien rempli les devoirs d'un bon Académicien." Such was the verdict of the devoted Guillet de S. Georges, on a useful, and on the whole successful and picturesque, career. One has more sympathy with the artist and the swordsman who retired to Rome and lived out his life with dignity and self-respect, than with the ambitious schemers ever on the watch to trip each other up at the court of Louis XIV.

The great Le Brun himself is said to have designed the Church of S. Nicholas du Chardonnet, begun in 1656. It is a depressing church, and the details are bad and even ignorant, and if Le Brun

<sup>1</sup> J. F. Blondel, "Arch. Franc.," iii, 133.

really designed this church, he would have done better to have left all detail to the excellent workmen of his time. J. F. Blondel<sup>1</sup> makes no mention of Le Brun except in regard to the monuments, and although he says the church was well built and "d'une ordonnance assez régulière," it is in relation to this church that he remarks severely on certain licences, and warns his students that unless this "dérèglement" was resisted, architecture would relapse "dans l'état où nous l'avons vûe du temps des Goths." In the following century architecture actually did so, though the change did not come quite as Blondel supposed. It is probable that all that Le Brun really did at S. Nicholas was to design the decorations of the chapel of S. Charles to receive his unpleasant monument to his mother—"Ce beau morceau," D'Argenville calls it.<sup>2</sup> He was also asked to advise on the sculpture and architecture of the High Altar, but replied that "après la manière dont on avoit agi avec lui au sujet de ces ouvrages," he would have nothing more to do with it.<sup>3</sup> Le Brun did, however, take an active part in the famous competition for a sixth order to be known as "l'ordre François." This competition was started by Colbert. In 1672 he wrote to Errard in Rome on the subject of a design for the new order "que le Roy fait rechercher," made by a Father of the Oratory in Rome named Chappuis and an architect named Barrière.<sup>4</sup> Colbert gave it as his opinion that the design was "assez bien," but desired to know more about Barrière. Meanwhile, he promised to enter the design for the competition. Le Brun was a serious competitor. He invented models and mouldings, gave his column ten diameters,<sup>5</sup> and made his entablature between a quarter and a fifth the height of the column. Guillet de S. Georges says the entablature was actually carried out in the Grand Gallery of Versailles. Thousands of designs were sent in, and everyone abused everybody else's design. François Blondel pronounced the whole thing to be rubbish, and Le Brun, with considerable astute-

<sup>1</sup> "Arch. Franc.," ii, 92.

<sup>2</sup> "Voyage Pittoresque de Paris," p. 282. Dezallier D'Argenville says that Le Brun, "en a conduit jusqu'aux moindres parties." Le Brun also painted the picture of the High Altar. "Il représente S. Charles Borromée suivi de plusieurs clercs, qui tiennent des flambeaux." The monuments are fully described in the "Description de Paris," v, 302-330, by Piganiol de la Force, who says Le Brun's Chapel was decorated with "le plus de goût et le plus de génie" of all the chapels in Paris.

<sup>3</sup> "Mémoires inédits," i, 50. Unfortunately the MS. breaks off for a page at this point, and no information is given as to what had happened.

<sup>4</sup> "Corres. des Directeurs," i, 34, 35.

<sup>5</sup> Guillet de S. Georges says "dix diamètres de la base," but I think it must mean the usual diameter of the column above the base.



ness, cut his losses, and was one of the first to declare that the experiment was a mistake, and that there was no getting away from the essential elements of architecture, the column, the capital, the architrave, the frieze, and the cornice, "le reste de l'invention n'étant qu'une minutie."<sup>1</sup> The remarkable thing is that such a clear-headed man as Colbert should have troubled himself about it at all, and still more that he should have thought himself competent to judge.

Pierre<sup>2</sup> Mignard, the architect, would possibly never have been heard of had he not been an original member of the Academy of Architecture. He was born at Avignon in 1640, and was a nephew of Pierre Mignard, the rival of Le Brun, and for a time studied painting under his uncle. Indeed, like Errard, he was a decorative painter, quite as much as an architect.<sup>3</sup> In 1671 Colbert sent his son Seignelay to Rome to study the arts and put him in charge of François Blondel and of Le Sieur Mignard, "qui sait fort bien dessiner,"<sup>4</sup> the skill in drawing to which Colbert refers having been shown in certain drawings of the ancient buildings of Languedoc and Provence which he had been employed to make in 1669. These drawings are referred to in an entry in the "Comptes," 1669, "au Sr. Mignard, Peintre et architecte, pour le dépense du voyage qu'il doit faire en Provence, Languedoc et autres provinces de ce royaume pour y designer et lever le plan des bastimens antiques qui s'y trouveront remarquables pour leur belle architecture—900 francs."<sup>5</sup> The Commission shows how anxious and far-reaching was Colbert's care for the arts and for architecture in particular. It had long been customary to draw the ancient buildings of Italy, but here, for the first time, the chief Minister of State employed a young architect to make drawings of notable buildings in France, a tentative effort towards the record and protection of ancient monuments. In this same year (1669) Claude Perrault made a journey to Bordeaux, of which he kept careful notes illustrated by his own

<sup>1</sup> "Mémoires inédits," pp. 32-33, Guillet de S. Georges says that Le Clerc engraved the order.

<sup>2</sup> It is uncertain whether his name was Pierre or Paul. M. de Montaignon, "Corres. des Directeurs," inclines to Paul; M. Lemonnier to Pierre. Both were sons of Nicholas Mignard (1606-1660). Dezallier D'Argenville calls him Pierre.

<sup>3</sup> He was painter in ordinary to the Queen of France.

<sup>4</sup> Instructions of Colbert to Seignelay ("Corres. des Directeurs," i, 30 Jan. 1671).

<sup>5</sup> M. Guiffrey in a note to the entry in the "Comptes" says these drawings were made by Nicholas Mignard, the father, but it is certain they were made by the son, whether his name was Pierre or Paul. The drawings were not published and have entirely disappeared, though D'Argenville says that some of them were engraved by the Comte de Caylus.

sketches. It does not appear what was the purpose of the journey, but most of Perrault's notes deal with ancient buildings, among them "Les Piliers de Tutèle," which once stood on the site of the Grand Theatre at Bordeaux.<sup>1</sup> Colbert's effort for the preservation of ancient buildings was not carried through, for the "Piliers" were destroyed in 1677, and with them perished one of the most remarkable fragments of antiquity in France.

At the end of 1670 Mignard received <sup>2</sup> 2,000 francs for his plans and elevations, "des beaux bastimens antiques en divers endroits de la France," and travelling expenses for thirteen months, and at the same time an advance of 1,200 francs for the tour in Italy, on which he started early in 1671. Mignard acquitted himself of his travelling tutorship so well that Colbert nominated him as one of the original members of the new Academy of Architecture, and for the next few years Mignard took an active part in its deliberations. He also appears to have been put on the official building staff, for in 1673 he appears among the "officers qui ont gages," with a salary of 500 francs. In 1674 he is quoted as having measured the columns of the temple of Mars Ultor at Rome,<sup>3</sup> and in the same year is referred to as having exactly measured and drawn the Maison Carrée and temple of Diana at Nîmes. In 1677 the Academy invited him to translate Scamozzi, and in the year following to re-design a Chapel for the Celestins at Avignon,<sup>4</sup> and associated him with Bruant to settle the quarrel of the brothers Le Pautre. In 1679 the Academy seem to have held a competition for a hospital at S. Brieuc, in Brittany, in which Mignard was placed first and Bruant second, but in this year he retired to Avignon, where he designed several buildings, and where, with the exception of short visits to Paris<sup>5</sup> in 1681 and 1689,<sup>6</sup> he spent the

<sup>1</sup> Perrault's very valuable note on this building is given in his "Voyage à Bordeaux" (Paul Bonnefon, Paris, 1909, pp. 183-185). The Corinthian columns were 4 feet 6 inches in diameter, and the building measured on plan 78 by 54 feet by 90 feet high to the top. Perrault says that in the last siege of Bordeaux the building was used as a battery, the columns being treated as gabions, with the result that they were a good deal injured and seven of them broken to pieces. He gives an illustration in his "Vitruvius," 2nd edit., p. 217. He there gives the dimensions as 90 by 66 feet, and gives further details of the monument.

<sup>2</sup> "Comptes," i, 481.

<sup>3</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," i, 63-65, "Pendant que MM. Blondel et Mignard estoient à Rome."

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 167.

<sup>5</sup> "Comptes," ii, 107.

<sup>6</sup> "Procès-Verbaux." He appeared at the Academy Meetings from July to November, but his name disappears from the building accounts after 1681, and the last entry of payment as an architect in the Royal employment occurs in 1679.



remainder of his life. His principal works at Avignon were the choir of the Cathedral, the Hôtel Dieu, the abbey buildings of the Benedictines of Montmajour, and the church of Roquefort. D'Argenville says that the abbey of Montmajour, near Arles, was his best work. It was a vast building in three storeys, vaulted, with walls 6 feet thick, and was much admired by everyone. In 1730 the buildings caught fire from a beam passing through the bakehouse chimney, and the whole building collapsed, even the stone walls breaking out into flames to the amazement of everyone. It then appeared that the contractor, instead of building the 6 feet walls of solid stone, had filled up the inside with faggots. The abbey was rebuilt by Franque,<sup>1</sup> architect of Avignon. Mignard died in 1725 and was buried in the church of S. Agricol at Avignon. His epitaph describes him as "*Nicolai patris et Petri patrui æmulus, inter pictores et architectos praeclarus . . . integritate morum ac erudita ingenii amœnitate flebilis.*"

Avignon—like Toulouse, Montpellier, and Lyons, and places far removed from Paris—pursued its own independent existence in the arts and letters. Lyons had been famous for centuries, Toulouse had its own Academy, and the Mignards were not the only family of artists of which Avignon could boast. Here also lived the family of Royer de la Valfenière, a member of which, François, architect of the Abbaye Royale des dames de S. Pierre at Lyons,<sup>2</sup> enjoyed a great reputation in the south of France. He was born in 1575 and died in 1667, and among his works were a fountain for the Chartreux at Villeneuve les Avignon, and the episcopal palace of Carpentras. The Abbaye was a considerable building; its façade measured 350 feet long, but its design was bald and provincial, almost that of an amateur with some rudimentary knowledge of architectural detail. Indeed, the standard of design set in Paris was beyond the reach of anybody but artists thoroughly trained in the technique of architecture, and, generally speaking, the days of the free-lance in art were over. With the Academy of Painting and Sculpture on the one hand, and the Academies of Architecture in Paris and Rome on the other, in full working order and apparently entirely out of touch with each other, the days when architects and painters could be treated as interchangeable no longer existed. Architecture was already too complicated and difficult an art for anybody to take it up as a side issue, and

<sup>1</sup> See note at end of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Now the Palais des Arts, Place des Terreaux. See "*Les de Royers de la Valfenière,*" by Leon Charvet, Lyons, 1870.

Bernini's disastrous failures in construction at S. Peter's were conclusive evidence that this could not be attempted with impunity. Though Le Brun was omnipotent in decoration as long as Colbert lived, and no doubt had his say in the distribution of architectural details, it does not appear that he attempted to interfere with architecture proper. Henceforward the architects went their way, and the painters and sculptors theirs, with the unfortunate result that the latter retired ever more and more into the production of easel pictures and isolated figures or groups of sculpture, and left architectural sculpture and painting, the field of the greatest triumphs of their art, to the ornamentalist and the decorator. Le Brun might be turgid and pompous, but he had a sense of decoration denied to such men as Meisssonier and Openord, and what Blondel stigmatized as the "arabesques" and "bambochades" of the eighteenth century, were a poor substitute for his schemes of decoration, grandiose as they were. It was the weak part of Colbert's system that he reorganized the arts on purely bureaucratic lines.

We now come to a much more interesting artist. Of the seven original architect members of the Academy<sup>1</sup> of Architecture, Anthoine Le Pautre, though by no means so distinguished a man as François Blondel, was a good deal the abler architect. As a house-planner he was ahead of his generation, and it is not easy to find a reason for his comparative want of success. He was born in Paris in 1614 and was the second son of Adrien Le Pautre, a cabinet maker, and the younger brother of that superb engraver, Jean Le Pautre, with whom, by the way, he quarrelled seriously in later life. His first important work was the Church and Monastery of Port Royal in the Faubourg S. Jacques, 1646-48. Le Pautre produced a rather elaborate design, which is shown in his engravings of the Church,<sup>2</sup> but much of the ornament was cut down to save expense. The entrance was, as usual, under a portico at the side, as in Errard's Church of the Assumption and François Mansart's Church of Ste. Marie, the chapel of the Sisters going away to the

<sup>1</sup> "Archives de l'Art Franc.," vol. i; François Blondel, 1618-1686; Antoine Le Pautre, 1621\*-1691; Louis Le Vau, 1613-1670; Pierre Mignard, 1640-1725; Liberal Bruand, 1635-1697; François D'Orbay, 1624-1697; Daniel Gittard, 1625-1687; (André Félibien, Sieur d'Avaux, Secretary, 1619-1695).

\* D'Argenville says 1614.

<sup>2</sup> "Œuvres d'Architecture d'Anthoine Le Pautre, Architecte du Roi," plates 55-59. Sauval, "Antiquités de la ville de Paris," iv, 425, says the church was built in 1625 (probably a misprint for 1645), and that it was all of S. Leu stone as white as marble, "au reste il n'y a rien de si propre, l'architecture en est tres agreable et des mieux entendues: sa manière à la verité est assez bisarre, mais fort galante et commode." What Sauval meant by this criticism I have no idea.



right of the entrance on the axis line of the high altar, which stood in a semicircular apse to the left of the entrance. Elliptical chapels were placed to the right and left of the apse, and the central space was square with a circular dome, separated by a single vaulted bay from the Chapel of the Sisters, as in Errard's Church. The plan is a bad variation of François Mansart's church, built some fifteen years before. The east end was well enough, but there was no perspective on entering the church, the eye being brought up sharp by the opposite wall. Mansart had made wonderful play with his curves on plan. Le Pautre missed his intention and spoilt the design by the square central space with the solitary bay beyond it.<sup>1</sup>

In 1648 Le Pautre was already an "Architecte des Bâtiments du Roi,"<sup>2</sup> and in 1652 he brought out his "Œuvres," a collection of miscellaneous designs, of which only two, that of Port Royal and that of the Hôtel Fontenay Mareuil, afterwards the Hôtel de Gesvres, were ever carried out. These designs show all sorts of different manners and motives, the rustications and orders above orders of De Brosse, the lumbering pavilions of Louis Le Vau, enormous terminal figures carrying porticoes, which faintly recall some of Du Cerceau's caprices, the astonishing design of a building on a plan of semicircles,<sup>3</sup> back to back, and the colossal order in elevation and section, which almost anticipates Vanbrugh, and then, in contrast to these fantastic projects, the rather dull designs of Port Royal and the house of the Marquis de Fontenay Mareuil. One feels that, with all this inventiveness, Le Pautre should have done better, and probably might have done so if he had been given the chance. There is real ability here and there spoiled by bad taste and inability to stop. Anthoine seems to have possessed some of the exuberant temperament of his elder brother, but, as shown in these plates, his inspiration as an artist<sup>4</sup> was ill-balanced and his technique uncertain. He is not known to have studied in Italy, and it is possible

<sup>1</sup> The buildings of the Abbey of Port Royal, including the chapel, are now occupied by "L'Hôpital de la Maternité," No. 125, Boulevard de Port Royal.

<sup>2</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," i, xxxvi.

<sup>3</sup> On the ground floor the whole of the central space is occupied by a "grand Porche pour passer les carrosses." Boffrand borrowed largely from Le Pautre in his designs for German Princes.

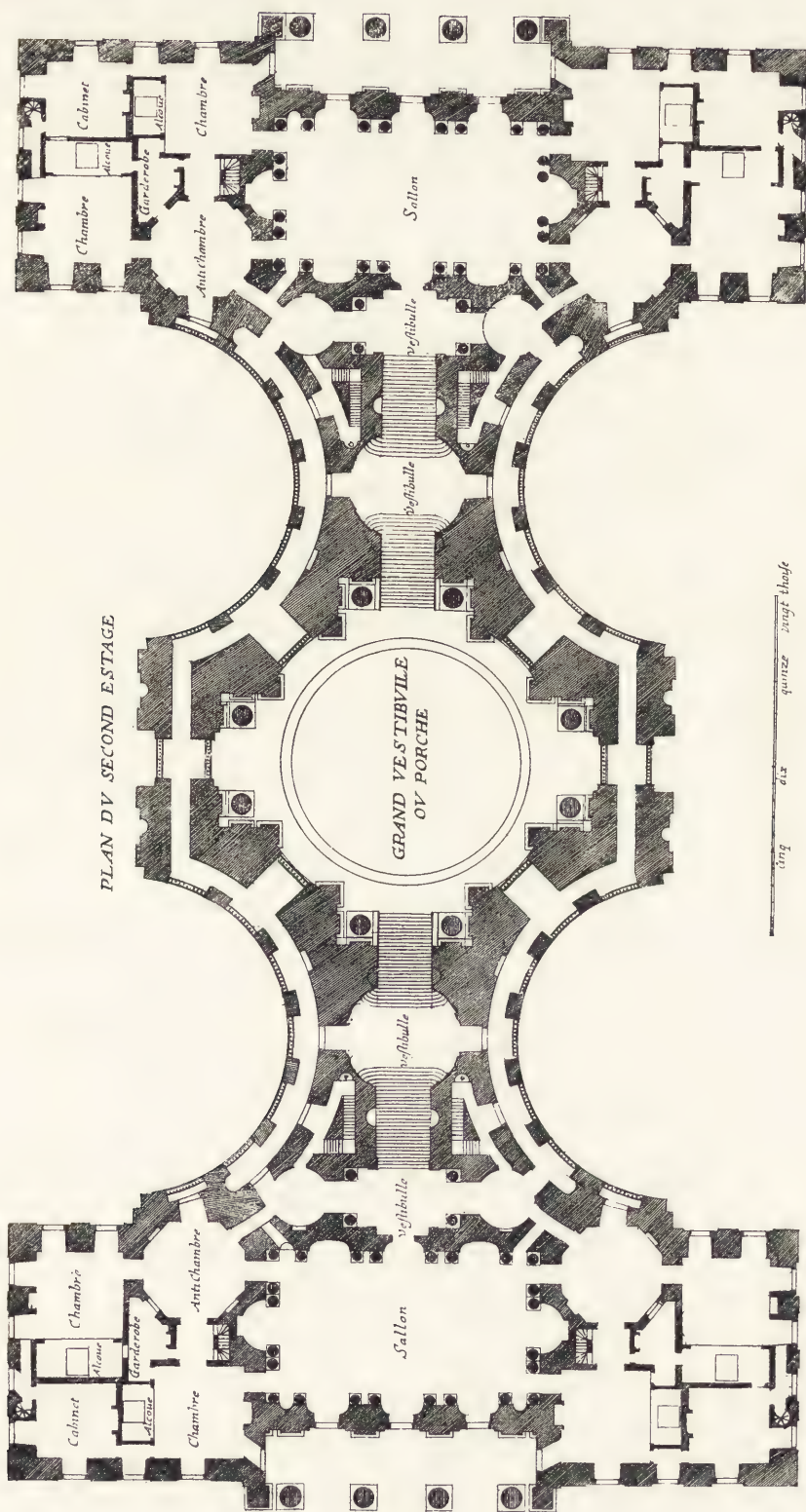
<sup>4</sup> Blondel, however, considered that these inventions were of "un excellent dessein et d'une composition mâle et ingénieuse." Le Pautre seldom puts titles to his plates, and Daviler in his "Discours" made no attempt to identify them. Most of them were probably designs in the air to attract attention. The first edition was published in 1652, when Le Pautre was at any rate old enough to have restrained his pencil.



A CEILING BY ANTHOINE LE PAUTRE (p. 112)  
(FROM "ŒUVRES D'ARCHITECTURE," PL. IX)







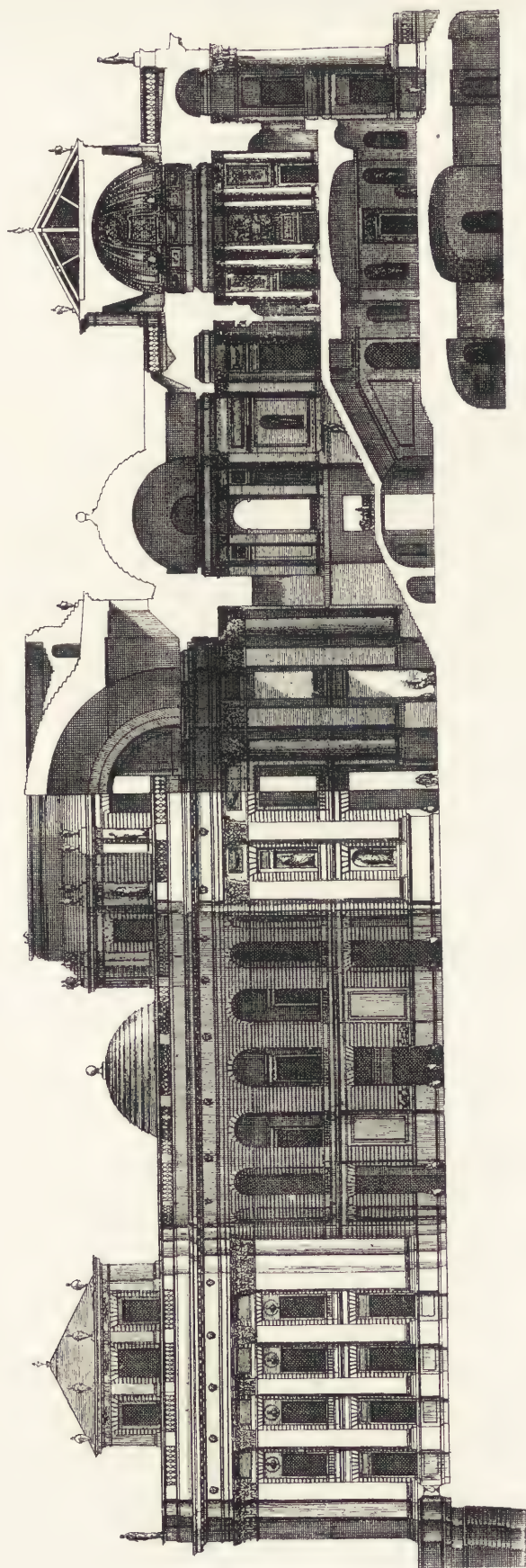
Par ANTHOINE LE PAVRE architecte du Roy avec Poullige

D.3.

PLAN OF THE PRINCIPAL FLOOR

DESIGN FOR A MANSION BY ANTHOINE LE PAVRE (see p. 112, and Pl. XXVI)  
510 feet long by 275 feet wide



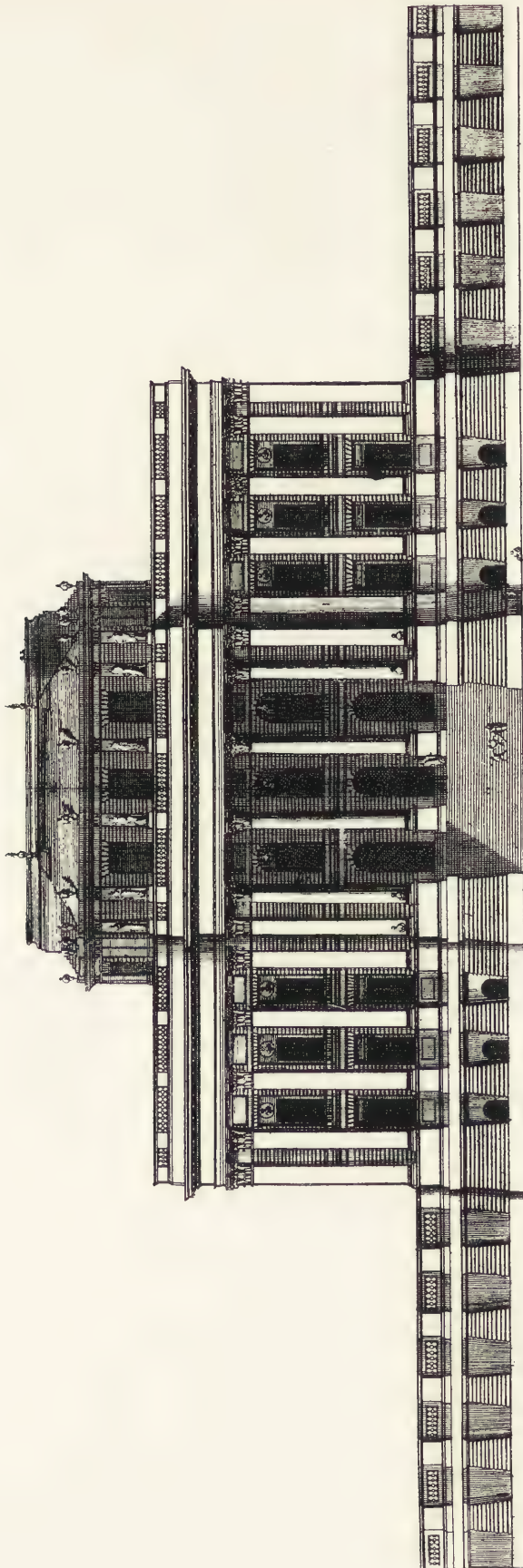


ESLEVATION DE LA MOITIÉE DE LA FASCE DV BATIMENT ENSEMBLE LA VEVE ET PROFIL DV VESTIBULE  
ESCAILLER ET DES DEDANS DES SAILONS ET PORCHES ALLANS AV PARTERRE ET OFFICES AV DEDANS .

Le Pautre, "Œuvres," pl. 29

HALF ELEVATION AND SECTION

DESIGN FOR A MANSION. BY A. LE PAUTRE (see p. 112)



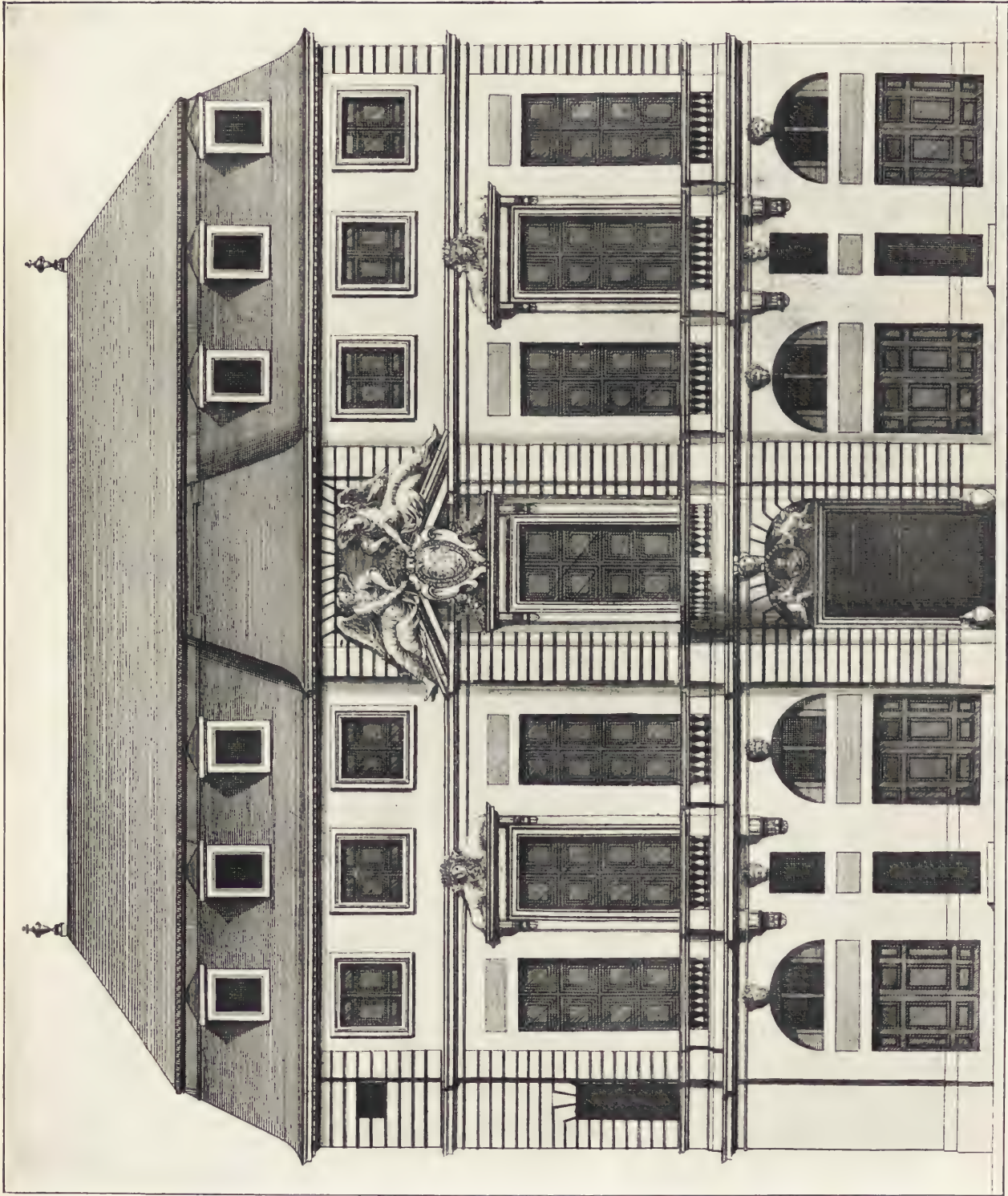
FASCE REGARDANT VN DES PARTERRES.

D. 6.

END ELEVATION (see Pl. XXV)

Par ANTHONIE LE DAVYRE Architecte du Roy avec Privilège





HÔTEL DE BEAUVAIS—STREET ELEVATION. A. LE PAUTRE (p. 113. For plans see PL. XXIX)

his training had stopped short of what was expected of a first-class architect at the time. But he was a most ingenious planner, and his treatment of the site of the Hôtel de Beauvais is one of the ablest pieces of planning in the whole range of French domestic architecture in the seventeenth century, and in a remarkable passage (to which I have already referred)<sup>1</sup> Sauval includes it in his list of houses that represented the last word in domestic architecture. The Hôtel was built for Pierre de Beauvais and Catherine Henriette, his wife, first Lady of the Bedchamber to Anne of Austria, and it was from this house that the latter watched the entry of the King and Queen into Paris on 26th August, 1660. In spite of this high social purpose, the Ground Floor, on the front to the Rue S. Antoine, was arranged for shops having no connection with the main building, an arrangement similar to that followed by Le Vau in the Collège des Quatre Nations, and a curious anticipation of the quite modern custom in the design of big hotels. Le Pautre designed his ground-floor front as an arcade in five bays, the centre arch giving access to the court of the house, the two on either side of it being designed as complete shops with *entresols* over. The central passage gives on to a circular Loggia surrounded by eight Doric columns, with the grand staircase to the left and the kitchen and offices to the right. The site beyond was most irregular. Le Pautre reduced it to symmetry by means of a regular hexagonal figure, of which the further side opened on to a semi-circular apse. The space outside this Court was occupied by coach-house, stables and a backway out to the Rue de Jouy. By this means the house really began at the First Floor, the principal rooms facing the Rue S. Antoine, and the Chapel being placed at the extreme end of the internal Court and entered from a terrace, which was continued as a balcony all round this court. The whole of the part occupied by stables, roadway, and offices on the Ground Floor was vaulted over and covered by a gallery 54 feet by 12 feet, separated by a small terrace garden

<sup>1</sup> See "History of French Architecture, 1494-1661," Reginald Blomfield, ii, 141. The Hôtel de Beauvais is, or was, when I saw it in 1910, put to ignoble uses, which made it difficult to examine the building closely. At the date of its erection, the Quartier S. Antoine was "très habité et décoré de magnifiques Hôtels de grandes maisons, d'édifices publics, etc." (Blondel, "Arch. Franc.," ii, 120.) Now it is approached by a shabby street, the Rue de François Miron, and there the great old house, plastered, painted, and *délabré*, still rises in melancholy dignity above its neighbours. The occupant declines to have it sketched, photographed, or examined. In the eighteenth century the house belonged to Philibert Orry, "Directeur Général des bâtiments arts et manufactures" and Controller General of Finances.



from a suite of rooms facing to the Rue de Jouy. Altogether it was a most ingenious and skilful treatment of a difficult site. The details are disappointing. The semicircle at the end of the Court is boldly handled, but otherwise the design of the elevations suggests a rather florid architectural sense, and the impression is theatrical. Blondel admits it was "un peu trop tourmentée," but he admired the general effect so much that he used to send his students here to study the effect of light and shade in architecture, and to learn to render "la vérité des tons, des lumières des teintes et des ombres."<sup>1</sup>

Le Pautre built a large country house for M. de Boisfranc, Governor of Paris, at S. Ouen, near Paris, which was engraved by Perelle. In Marot's engraving it is shown as a symmetrical design of no particular interest, with an *avant corps* in the centre and pavilions at the ends. The house was destroyed in 1816. Le Pautre had been one of the Architectes du Roi<sup>2</sup> since 1652 and perhaps earlier, and was also architect to the King's brother, the Duc d'Orléans, for whom he designed the two wings of S. Cloud. Here he had serious difficulties with his contractor.<sup>3</sup> In 1677 he complained to the Academy of Architecture, who had already approved his designs, that his designs here had been murdered by the contractor, "Girard, masson." "Il s'est ingeré de les estropier et gaster dans la plus grande partie, pêchant en mille endroits contre la beauté et la solidité de l'architecture." Mansart also complained of this same Girard, and the curious thing is that in Perelle's view of S. Cloud, made a few years later, "Le Sieur Girard" is described as the architect, and there is no reference to Le Pautre in any of the engravings of S. Cloud. Le Pautre appears to have been superseded by Girard, and he in turn was superseded by Gobert, who did the Trianon of S. Cloud.

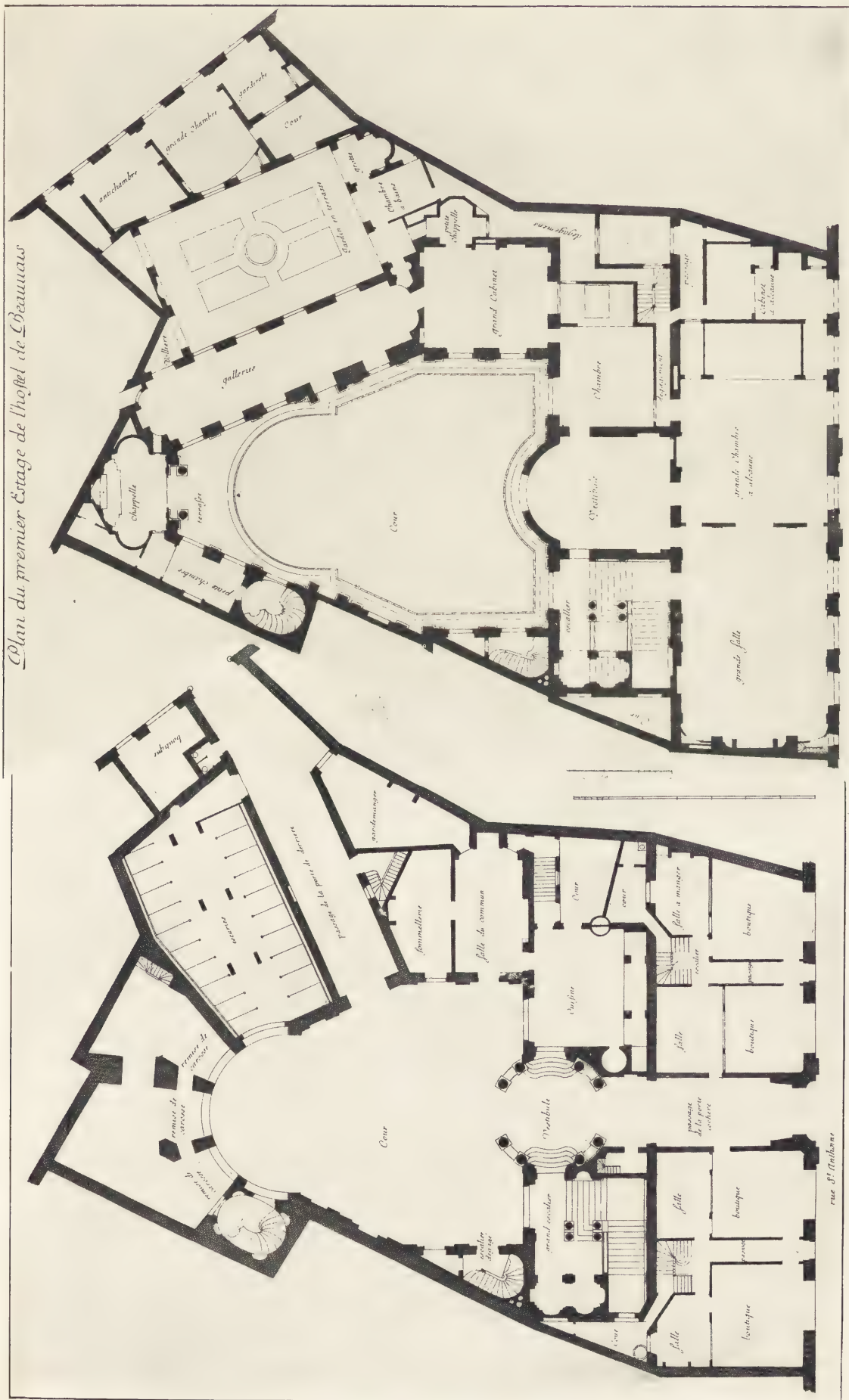
In 1675-76 Le Pautre received payments of 3,000 francs and 11,400 francs for works in connection with the lodgement of that disreputable person, the Chevalier de Lorraine, the favourite of the Duc d'Orléans, who was supposed to have arranged the poisoning of Henrietta Maria. It is not clear whether these payments were for the design of works or for their execution. I incline to think the latter, and

<sup>1</sup> "Arch. Franc.," ii, 122.

<sup>2</sup> Blondel says that he already held this post in 1655 with a salary of 1,200 livres, but under Colbert's administration he only appears among the "officers qui ont gages," with a salary of 500 francs.

<sup>3</sup> "Procès-Verbaux d'Acad. Royale d'Arch.," i, 147. S. Cloud was burnt down in 1870.

Plan du premier Étage de l'hôtel de Beauvais



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

HÔTEL DE BEAUVAIS, A. LE PAUTRE

GROUND PLAN





[Pencil]

S. CLOUD. GENERAL VIEW (see p. 114, and PL. XXXVII)

we find that from time to time the architects of Louis XIV undertook contracts on their own account. Le Pautre appears in the "Comptes" for the last time in 1678. For the last few years he had been steadily losing ground. He seems to have been rather quarrelsome, and apparently Colbert did not like him, and he had no chance against the new favourite who had suddenly sprung into the Royal favour. The plans for Clagny that Le Pautre had prepared in 1672 for Mme. de Montespan were rejected,<sup>1</sup> and the work, which was entrusted to Jules Hardouin Mansart, became the first stepping stone to that architect's extraordinary success. Le Pautre attended the Academy Conferences down to 1678, but only took part in the early proceedings of the famous Commission appointed by Colbert in 1678 to inquire into building-stones, and after that year his name disappears. Almost the last mention of him in the "Procès-Verbaux" was in connection with his quarrel with his brother. In July, 1678, the Academy of Architecture settled the differences between Le Pautre and his brother Jean, the engraver. The minute,<sup>2</sup> after stating the Academy's award, concludes with the words, "La Compagnie a le tout compensé et pris l'un et l'autre hors de cause et de procès," but Antoine may have been dissatisfied with the verdict, for from this year onward he ceased to attend the Academy Conferences. He died in 1691, having long outlived his reputation. He had never caught the King's eye and had never, in fact, accepted the academic position. Both in temperament and technique he belonged to the generation of Louis Le Vau, men who either did not know or did not heed the authoritative methods of classical architecture, and were not restrained by any fastidious taste from lapsing into serious faults of grammar. Le Pautre never shook off that "air de pesanteur" which Blondel found in him, he had an imperfect sense of proportion, and no delicacy of touch. Yet he was vigorous and full of invention. Mariette,<sup>3</sup> writing about fifty years later, says of him: "Il a été un de nos meilleurs architectes. Il avoit un goût de décorer qui étoit entièrement à lui et, dont la majesté doit plaire à ceux qui ne peuvent supporter tous ces colifichets et cette mesquinerie dont sont surchargés nos bâtiments." Mariette seems to have been thinking of his brother Jean, the engraver, but Antoine Le Pautre had one signal merit, which places him in the

<sup>1</sup> Mariette says, "Le Pautre en eut tant de chagrin qu'il ne put survivre à cette mortification." He survived it, however, nearly twenty years.

<sup>2</sup> "Procès-Verbaux de l'Acad. Royale d'Arch.," i, 175, 176. The quarrel was in regard to rent and other payments which Antoine claimed from his brother Jean.

<sup>3</sup> "Abecedario," s.v. Le Pautre (Antoine).



front rank of the architects of his time, he realized the importance and the possibilities of planning. The younger Blondel hit off his individual quality very happily : " Il a regardé le mouvement et la variété dans les plans, comme une beauté satisfaisante." Le Pautre was in advance of his time in realizing that fine planning is as essential in architecture as the design of fine elevations, and is in fact a vital element, a point which has been overlooked to a disastrous extent by most modern writers on architecture. There is more sense of architecture in the plans of the Hôtel de Beauvais and the interior of Ste. Marie than in all the capitals of the Ducal Palace. It is easy for eloquent writers to expatiate on the poetry and on the devotion and enthusiasm of their sculptors, on the windswept beauty of their foliage, or any other association that appeals to them, moral, religious, aesthetic or sentimental—all these things may be there, but the point is, what are we looking for in architecture, what is its function as an art? And here we find a fundamental division which affects the entire criticism of the art. The most fashionable criticism of recent years has regarded architecture as a song rather than as a symphony, that is to say, it expects architecture to make its appeal through the individual craftsmanship of the individual craftsman; the master mind is left out of account. Some beautiful capital, some delicate tracery, seems to these writers complete in itself as an expression of emotion, and to ask for more than this from architecture is held to be superfluous and pedantic. Sympathy with the craftsman on quite other grounds is cunningly enlisted, and we are told that here, and here only, is the work of man, and that any other conception of architecture is soulless and mechanical. In the result we find that our attention is invariably directed to the details of the building, and not to the building itself as an organic whole. After much excitement, enthusiasm and emotion we find ourselves brought up face to face, not with architecture, but with a subordinate part of it.

There is another theory of architecture, also a good deal in favour with a certain school, which reverses the process, which urges the abolition of all ornament, and regards architecture as nothing but scientific construction and the scientific use of materials, and in resolving the art into terms of science has regard to science in the very limited sense of natural science, that is, the laws of statics, dynamics and chemistry, matters of observation and experiment, and of opinions based on them. To critics of this school the orders and their details are anathema, they regard them with something of the terror and dislike with which a child thinks of a bogey, they cry out on the least suspicion of their appearance,

they shrink from the taint of scholarship, and we are asked to leave our construction in all its naked hideousness. Why we should turn our back on such harmless details as the orders, why we should decline to make use of the accumulated experience of centuries of architecture, why we should deliberately forgo the familiar and accredited words of our language has never been shown. After all, these architectural forms are merely words which a competent designer will use or not as he pleases, and as he finds best adapted to realize and express his idea. It is perfectly true that the architect must be a sound constructor, so is the engineer, but the latter stops there; the architect, if he is worth his place, has to go further, he has to make his appeal to the emotions through the forms and combination of forms which he employs; where the engineer can rest content with obedience to the ascertained laws of physical science, the architect has to take a wider view, he has to take account of the aesthetic emotions, of a whole mental and moral world, on which the engineer, who deals only with physical conditions, can turn his back, as he usually does. Either of these points of view would have been held to be intolerable in the period with which we are dealing. The great French architects of the seventeenth century showed their conviction, both in theory and in practice, that architecture is a great organic art, that in a fine building all the details—capitals, orders, entablatures on the one hand, tracery, pillars, buttresses on the other—fall into their appointed place, and together contribute to the expression of a dominant idea, and that if a detail, however beautiful it may be, asserts itself to the detriment of other parts of the design, that in itself shows that there is some fault in the architecture, just as a false note in music would spoil the beauty of the whole composition. I believe that the French architects were entirely right. That architecture is pre-eminently the art of order and arrangement, “τέχνη ἀρχιτεκτονική” is, I am convinced, the only conception of the art that justifies its place of honour, and that entitles it to rank as one of the noblest expressions of the human intellect.

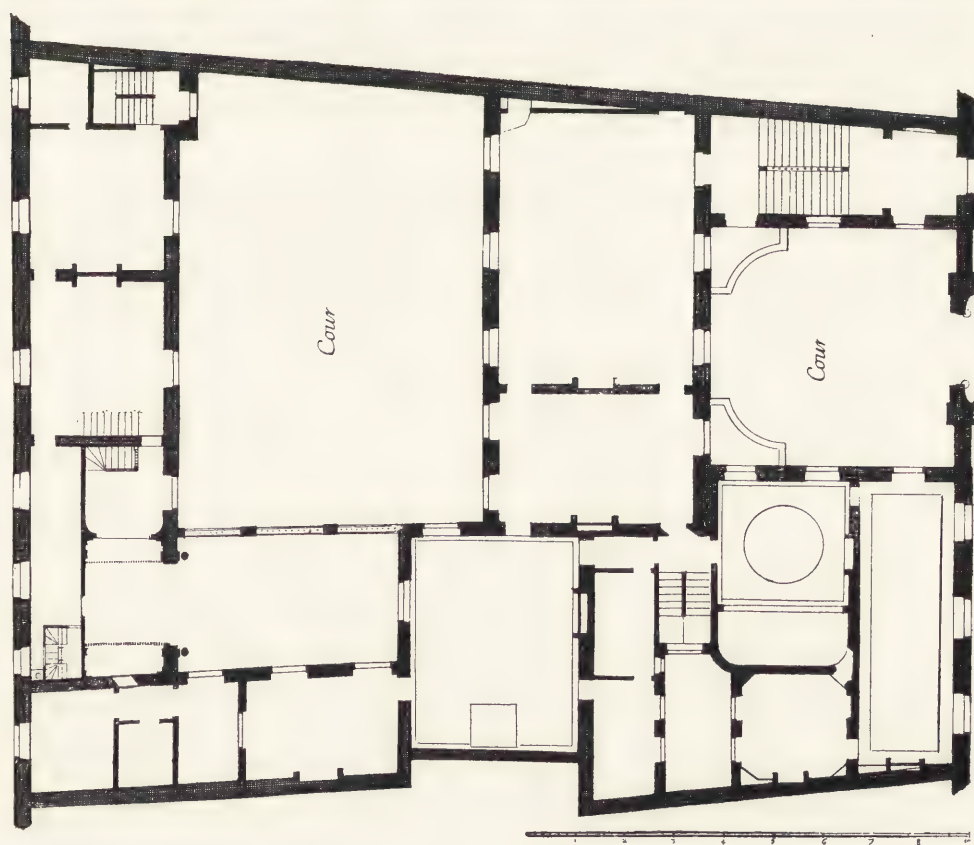
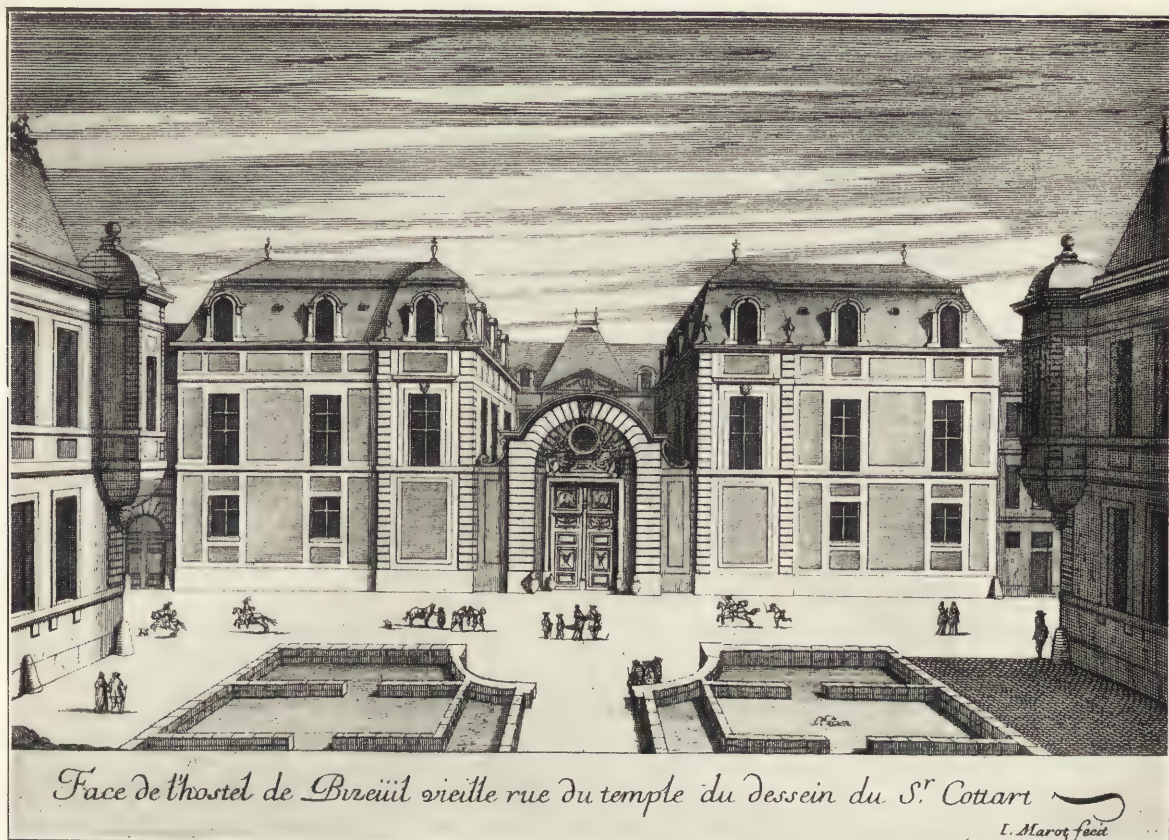


## CHAPTER IX

COTTART, RICHER, ROBELIN, DE LISLE, LEVÉ, GIRARD,  
GOBERT, LE DUC, GITTARD

ALMOST at the same time that Le Pautre was designing the Hôtel de Beauvais, Pierre Cottart was designing the Hôtel de Bisseuil or d'Hollande, as it was called in later years. In 1655 Jean Baptiste Amelot, Vicomte de Bisseuil, inherited from his father, a retired Maître des Requêtes, an old house in the Rue Vieille du Temple, and determined to alter and enlarge the house, and to make it the best thing of its kind in Paris. Cottart, whom he employed as his architect, described the house as "petite mais assez bien aménagée," and when we consider the rudimentary methods of house-planning still in use at the time, this modest claim is justified. The Hôtel d'Amelot was a real advance in scientific house planning. The ground floor was, as usual, devoted to the kitchen and offices, and clever use was made of the entrances from the two streets to which this house faced. The first floor was the principal floor. Here Cottart provided separate suites for Monsieur and Madame—that of Monsieur consisting of a salon, a gallery, a cabinet and garde-robe, that of Madame of a large sitting-room, a bed-room, a garde-robe, a Cabinet, a Chapel, and a terrace with a small salon at the end. The position of staircases and convenience of access and service were closely studied, and instead of sacrificing everything to parade, a real attempt was made to provide a comfortable house to live in, with a reasonable amount of light and air. Indeed the plans are a good deal better than the elevations and sections, for Cottart's taste was rather florid, and Amelot de Bisseuil had the usual failing of the enthusiastic amateur, in that he wanted to do a great deal too much and bring in everything. Cottart<sup>1</sup> says

<sup>1</sup> "Recueil des Œuvres du Sieur Cottart, Architecte," 1686.



*L. Marot fecit*

FIRST FLOOR PLAN





modestly, "Je ne vante pas beaucoup le bastiment de cette maison, mais la belle ordonnance et la magnificence de l'ouvrage, les belles peintures et sculptures faites par les plus excellens maîtres de Paris," and adds that the credit was mainly due to the fine taste and knowledge of his employer. Its modest splendours were soon to be eclipsed by the decorations of the Louvre,<sup>1</sup> and the magnificence of Vaux le Vicomte; yet the Hôtel d'Amelot de Bisseuil was a serious effort in design and decoration, and was so recognized at the time. Germain Brice wrote that it was so full of beautiful things that it deserved the most careful study.<sup>2</sup> Renaudin and Sarazin were employed on its sculpture, Vouet, Poerson, Corneille, Dorigny, and La Fosse on its paintings. The walls of the interior court were painted with architectural perspectives, an early instance of a practice that became very fashionable a few years later. Every part of the interior appears to have been richly decorated in colour, and Brice remarks that details which are usually neglected had here their "beauté particulière." For example, the window boards were of cedar, inlaid with ebony and ivory. The furniture of the doors was of polished steel, delicately chased. The tables and mirrors were enriched with tortoise-shell and ivory and mouldings of *ormoulu* chased and gilded, "on ne verra point dans un autre lieu des ornemens dessinez avec plus de correction et finis avec plus de soin." The work was begun in 1657 and completed in 1660. For several years afterwards it was one of the show houses of Paris, and in 1688 the "Mercure Galant" was still able to refer to it as a "belle maison qui est fort estimée par l'architecture qu'il y a fait observer."<sup>3</sup> Blondel thought it deserved seven plates in his "Arch. Franc.," and stoutly defended himself for its insertion against those of his critics who held that such buildings were "vieux jeu." It is true

<sup>1</sup> In 1661 the Gallery of Apollo at the Louvre was destroyed by fire and its reconstruction and decoration by Le Brun was the first work that Louis XIV took in hand after the death of Mazarin, and its ceiling, though not completed, remained one of the most magnificent efforts of decoration of the whole of his reign. "La royauté jusqu'alors écrasée, par le luxe de la décoration des hôtels particuliers, reprenait sur ce point une éclatante supériorité" (Dussieux, "Les Artistes Français à l'Étranger," p. 67).

<sup>2</sup> "Nouvelle Description," ii, 98-103, ed. 1725. The description of the house is unusually full.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by M. Sellier, "Anciens Hôtels de Paris," p. 112. In the eighteenth century Caron de Beaumarchais occupied the house, and it was here that he wrote his "Mariage de Figaro." In the nineteenth century it was let to various tenants for trade purposes, and in this way lost most of its architecture and decoration. M. Sellier says that faint traces of the ebony and ivory inlay on the window boards were still visible in 1910.



his fine critical taste could not tolerate the exuberance of much of its detail.<sup>1</sup> Cottart designed the "Hôpital de la Merci" in Paris, near the Hôtel de Soubise, and in the entrance to the Church of this establishment used columns of oval section "forme bizarre et presque sans exemple, moins par caprice, que dans la vûe de ménager de bien peu le terrain, qui est assez serré a cet endroit."<sup>2</sup> He completed the Hôtel de Ville of Troyes in 1674 and a Church at Villa-Cerf close by. He appears in the "Comptes" in 1670, '71, '72, '73, '74, '75, as one of the "officers qui ont gages" at the humble salary of 200 francs per annum. He then disappears from the "Comptes" for twenty years, and we hear nothing more of him till January 1696, when he is granted 300 francs "pour lui donner moien de subsister." This was continued year by year as a donation or "gratification,"<sup>3</sup> a crust thrown by Mansart to a starving colleague. In 1701 it is entered again as a pension, and Cottart appears to have died that year, for in February 1702 158 livres 13 sous 8 deniers were paid "aux héritiers de Pierre Cottart, architecte des Bâtimens, pour six mois et dix jours de la pension de 300 francs par an que Sa Majesté lui a accordée pendant le temps pour lui donner moyen de subsister." Cottart, like Le Pautre, Perrault, and other able men, was one of the failures crowded out by Mansart and his clique.<sup>4</sup> He was never a member of the Academy.

In studying the history of architecture of this period one comes across many such cases, men who just failed to reach a permanent place among the artists of their time. In the engravings of Marot, Silvestre, and Perelle are to be found the names of architects, such as Gobert, Richer, Robelin, De Lisle, Girard, and Levé who may or may not have been able architects, but of whom little is known except their names, and their connection with one or two buildings. The reputation of an architect is in the great majority of cases a precarious matter, because in the first place historians of buildings are so much occupied with the owner that they usually omit to mention the architect, and in the second place, buildings cannot be carted about like pictures and statuary, and studied in galleries, so that their authors remain unknown

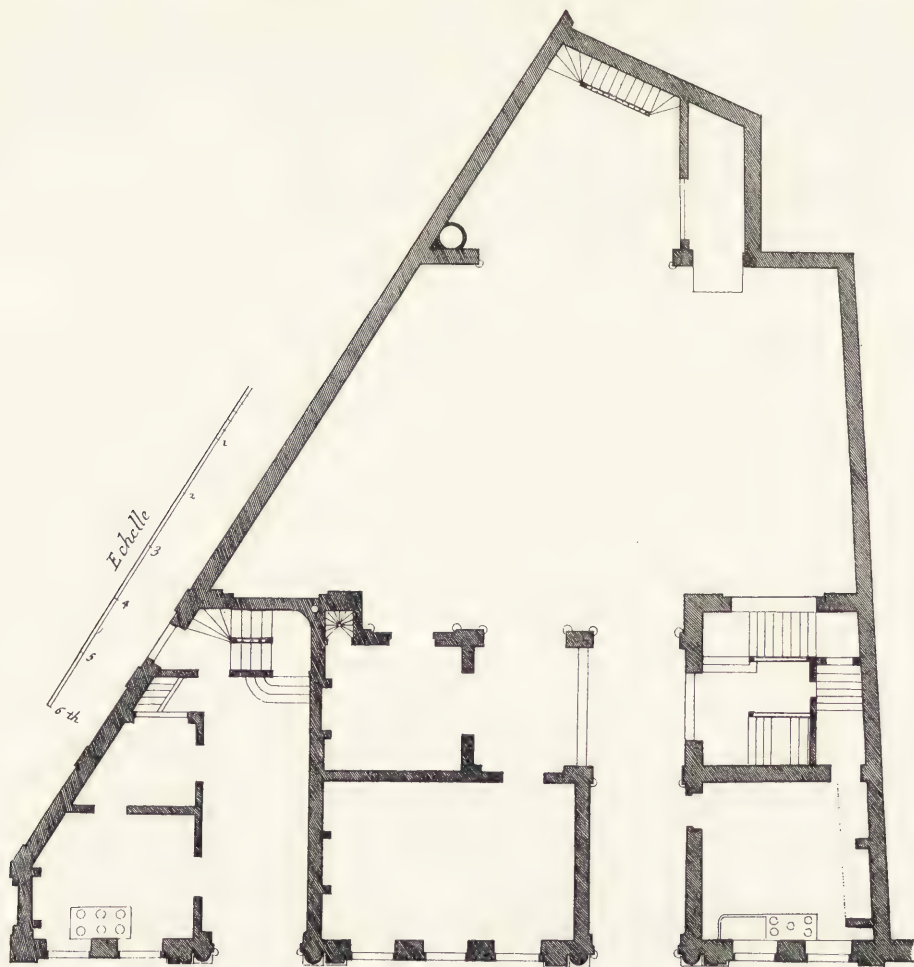
<sup>1</sup> "Arch. Franc.," ii, 152-159.

<sup>2</sup> Germain Brice, "Nouv. Desc.," ii, 93.

<sup>3</sup> Thus in the "Comptes" for 31 December 1699, "au Sr. Cottart architecte par gratifications pour 1699, 300 francs."

<sup>4</sup> In the "Comptes" for 1676 there is an entry of payments to "Cottart et Jombert qui ont echaffaudé le peristille du Louvre pour leur salaires et vacations," but this probably refers to builders. Blondel, who had no access to the "Comptes," knew nothing of Cottart, but believed him to be a contemporary of Lemercier and Le Pautre. He was of Le Pautre but not of Lemercier.

Face de l'Entrée d'une Maison située rue de Cléry à Paris bâtie par J Richer



Se vend Paris Chez Jacques Langlois rue St Jacques à la Renomme

GROUND PLAN

J. Marot fecit.

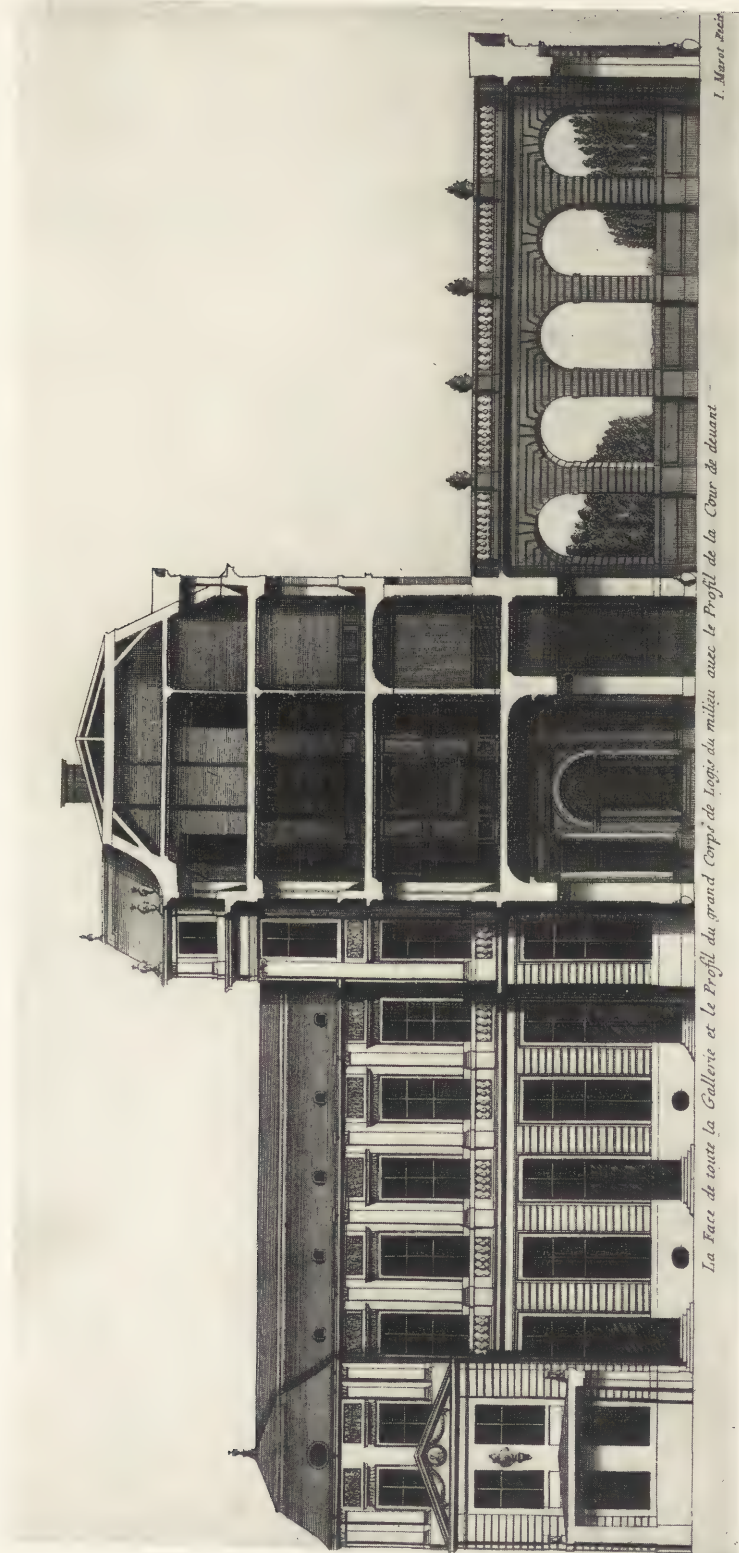
HOUSE IN RUE DE CLÉRY, PARIS. DESIGNED BY J. RICHER (see p. 121)

[I. TO FACE P. 120





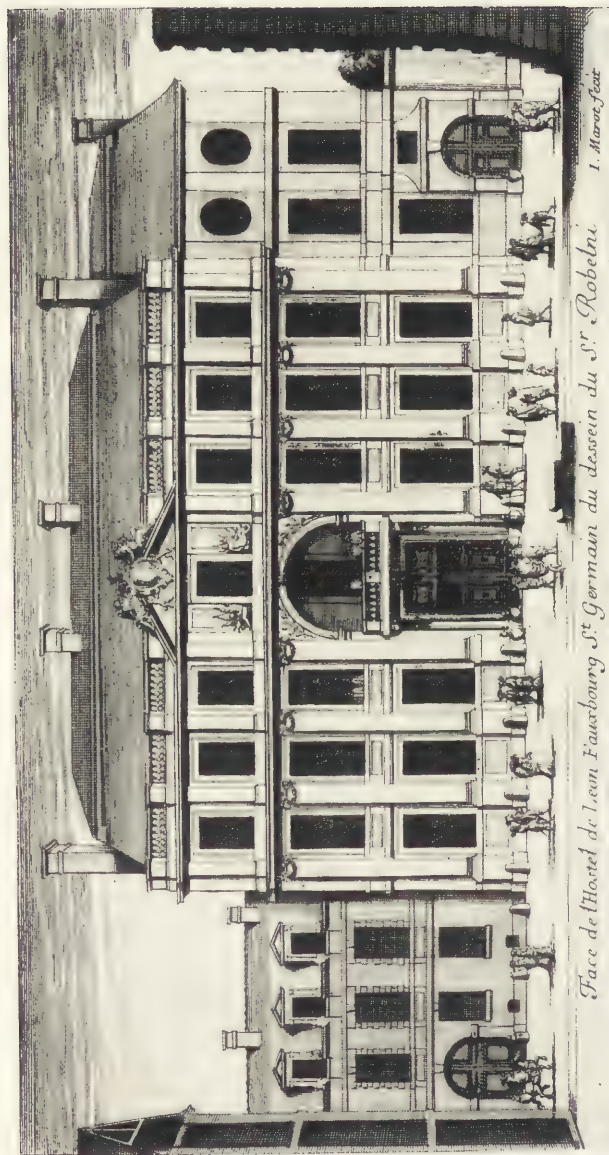
ELEVATION AND SECTION THROUGH COURT  
HOUSE FOR M. PASQUIER, PARIS. JEAN RICHER (see p. 121)



CROSS SECTION

HOUSE FOR M. PASQUIER, JEAN RICHER (see p. 121)





*Face de l'Hôtel de Leon Fausbourg St Germain du dessein du S<sup>r</sup> Robelin*

HÔTEL DE LEON. ROBÉLIN (p. 121)

to the public, and there is little chance for the rediscovery of some unknown master.

Jean Richer designed a house in the Rue de Cléry, Paris, and a house for M. Pasquier in the Rue Bourlabé, Paris, both of which were engraved by Marot. Neither house is of any particular merit. Blondel<sup>1</sup> says that he was a pupil of Le Vau, whose manner he followed, and that "en général ses distributions et ses décorations meritent quelque estime." He designed the Hôtels d'Outremont, Rue du Cloître S. Médéric, and de L'estrade in the Rue de Cléry, and the entrance of the Hôtel de Noailles, Rue S. Honoré. In the "Comptes" for 1672-74 a Richer appears as a pensionary among the "gens de lettres," as a professor of mathematics and astronomy, and as receiving 400 francs for a voyage to Cayenne. There were also Antoine Richer, an engraver, Claude, an illuminator, Jacques, a painter, and Jean "graveur ordinaire du Roy" (1685), all living at this time, and probably related to the architect.<sup>2</sup>

Robelin designed the Hôtel de Léon in the Faubourg S. Germain, and may have been related to M. Robelin, who appears in the "Comptes" in connection with some sales of plant used in the aqueduct of Maintenon or to a Sr. Robelin "ingénieur ordinaire du Roi" who was employed on that aqueduct,<sup>3</sup> and is described in an entry in 1697 as "ingénieur du Roi ayant la direction du grand aqueduct de Maintenon."

De Lisle, who designed the Hôtel du Grand Prieur de France in the Temple, became an Academician in 1699. Marot gives three views of this attractive house which suggest the influence of François Mansart rather than Jules Hardouin. De Lisle was connected with the Mansarts through the Hardouins. Edme De Lisle "peintre ordinaire de S.M.," who died in 1667 was uncle to two of the Hardouins,<sup>4</sup> and De Lisle is entered in the list of Academicians as "Mansard de Lisle." It was probably to J. H. Mansart that he owed his nomination to the Academy and appointment as Controller at Monceaux in 1699.<sup>5</sup> Brice mentions "un maison assez joli"<sup>6</sup> by De Lisle in the Rue de Charonne, Paris, and another in the Rue de la Couture Sainte Catherine,

<sup>1</sup> "Arch. Franc.," iii, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Herluison, "Actes d'État Civil," etc.

<sup>3</sup> "Comptes," iv, 148, 275. Herluison mentions Adam Robelin, "Architecte et maître masson," 1649, S. Sulpice, and "Marc Robelin, architecte du bastiments du Roy, doyen des maîtres massons," 1659, buried in St. Germain L'Auxerrois.

<sup>4</sup> Herluison, "Actes d'État Civil," etc.

<sup>5</sup> "Comptes," iv, 554.

<sup>6</sup> Brice, "Nouv. Desc.," ii, 271, and 200.



in which de Lisle, "architecte renommé de l'Academie a employé toute sa science." De Lisle drew his fees for attendances at the Academy from 1699 till 1708. His name disappears after that year, and it is probable that he died in 1708-9. He had been an "architecte du Roi" at a salary of 2,000 francs per annum since 1706.<sup>1</sup>

The "Sieur Levé"<sup>2</sup> designed a good simple house in the Rue de Richelieu early in the eighteenth century which was engraved by Mariette. The design resembles those of the elder L'Assurance. Girard, to whom I have already referred, was certainly employed as a contractor, and a very bad one, by Le Pautre at S. Cloud, but he appears to have ousted Le Pautre, and in 1680 to have blossomed out as architect to Philip Duc d'Orléans at S. Cloud. He is not mentioned in the "Comptes" at all, and we should never have heard of him had it not been for Perelle. Fortunately Perelle made a fairly complete set of engravings of S. Cloud, both house and gardens, and from one of these we learn that the house was completed in 1680 for Monsieur, brother of the King (Philip of Orléans), that Girard was the architect, and the decorations were by Mignard and Noret. The main block of the house was of three storeys, with a mansard roof and lucarnes above the attic storey. On either side of the forecourt were two-storey wings by Le Pautre, clumsily designed, the ends much too wide for their height. Perelle also gives a view of S. Cloud, which shows part of an older and in some ways more attractive building, and Piganiol de

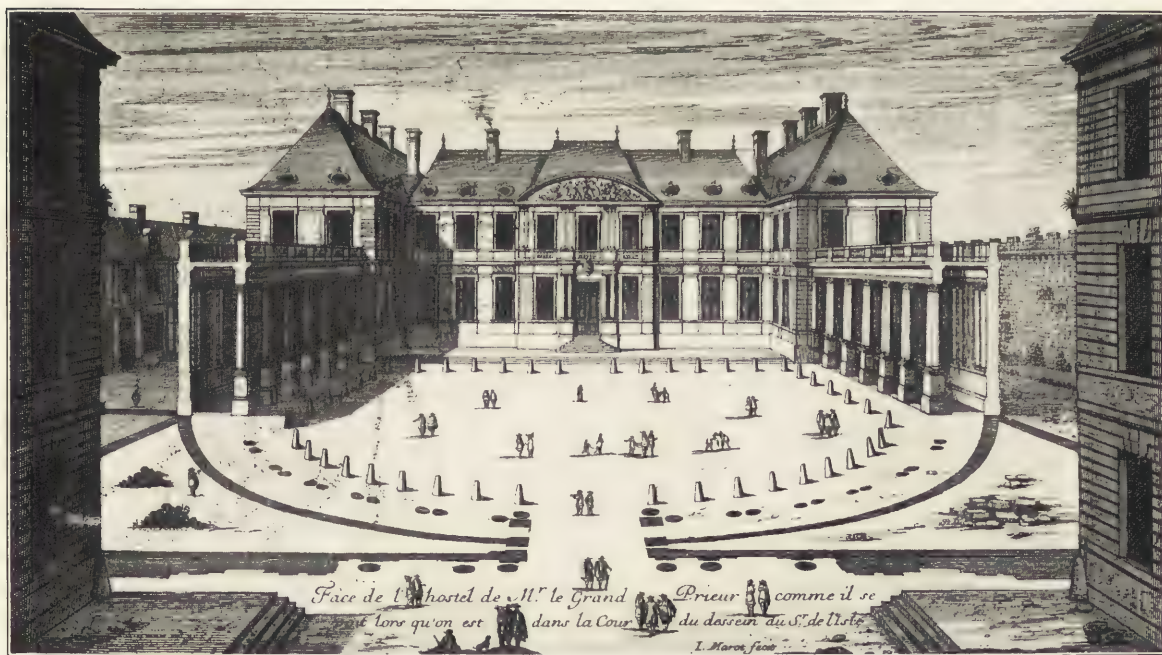
<sup>1</sup> Bauchal identifies the architect of the Hôtel du Grand Prieur with a certain Pasquier De Lisle who is mentioned by Piganiol de la Force ("Desc. Hist.," iv, 111-112), as having designed a famous organ gallery in the Church of S. Jean en Grève, now destroyed, but Piganiol's description appears to refer to a work of the end of the fifteenth century.

<sup>2</sup> Bauchal, I do not know on what authority, suggests that he was the son of a François Levé who is described in the "Comptes" as a Contractor for masonry at Fontainebleau in 1664-5. Herluisson mentions a François Levé "architecte du Roi et contracteur général de la ville et faubourgs de Paris," who died before 1696, when his son Jean "marchand bourgeois de Paris" was married to Anine Geneviève Desproz in the presence of his brother Pierre Levé "architecte des bâtiments du Roi." It was this Pierre Levé, I take it, who designed the house in the Rue de Richelieu, but the only Pierre Levé that I find mentioned in the "Comptes" is a large contractor for masonry who did work at S. Germain in 1682, and at Versailles between 1684 and 1705. At the latter place he was associated with a Robert de Cotte, both of them being described as "entrepreneurs," and paid large sums in that capacity. Unless we are to suppose that De Cotte undertook contracts while actually holding a high official position as an architect there must have been two Robert De Cottes, and may have been two Pierre Levés. More probably Levé assumed the title of "architecte," even "architecte du Roi," though it was against the law, which limited the use of that title to members of the Academy.



[Perelle

FRONT TO STREET



[Perelle

SECTION THROUGH COURT AND ELEVATION

THE HOUSE OF THE GRAND PRIOR. DE L'ISLE (see p. 121)

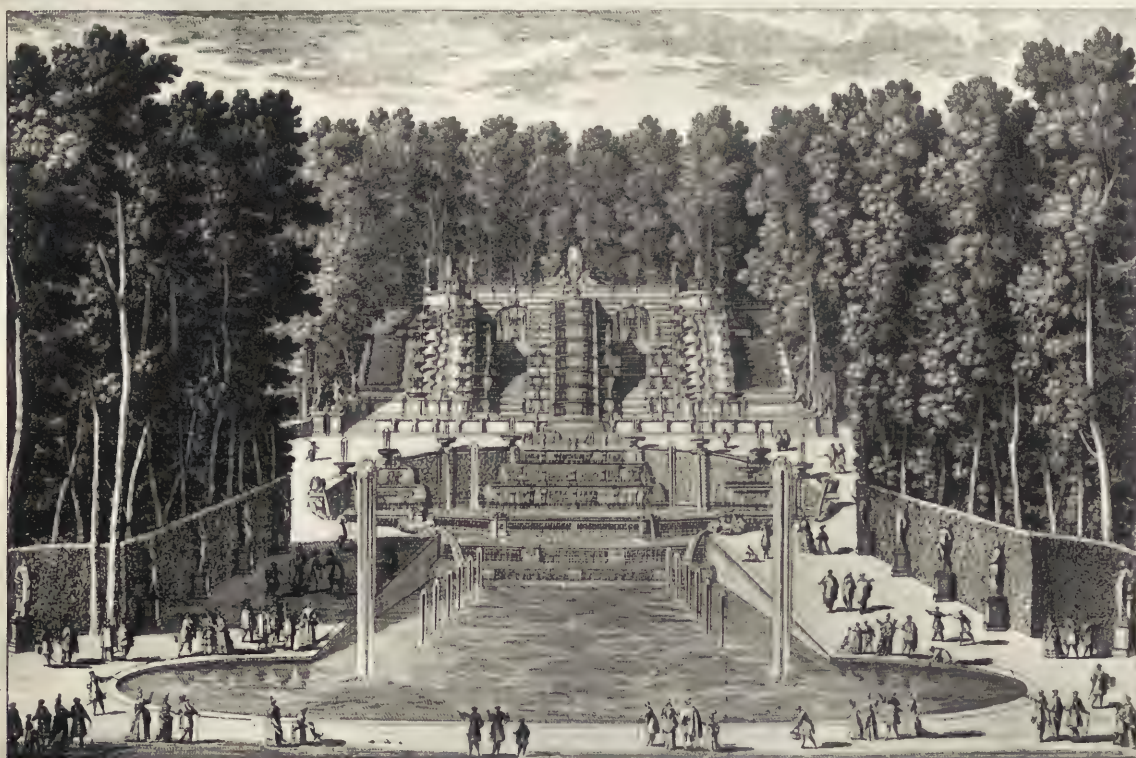




LE CHATEAU DE S.<sup>t</sup> CLOUD du costé que l'on arrive, achevé en 1680. appartenant à Monsieur frère unique du Roy. L'ordonneur en a été M. Mignard on a peint la galerie qui est à main droite et le salon attenant les ouvrages de Peinture qui sont de l'autre costé, sont de M. Noëret Peintre ordinaire de son Altesse Royale.  
à Paris chez M. Mariette. Rue S.<sup>t</sup> Jacques aux Colonnnes d'Heracles

[Perelle

S. CLOUD. LE PAUTRE AND GIRARD (p. 123)  
(DESTROYED)



Les Nouvelles Cascades de S.<sup>t</sup> Cloud.  
à Paris chez M. Mariette. aux Colonnnes d'Heracles.

[Perelle

S. CLOUD—THE CASCADES. GOBERT (p. 123)



la Force<sup>1</sup> says that on the site of S. Cloud as bought by Monsieur there were three houses, one of which belonged to Fouquet. It is probable that the house shown in this engraving is one of the earlier houses, which was altered and added to first by Le Pautre with Girard as contractor, and afterwards by Girard. In the registers of S. Benoît there is an entry of the marriage of Jean Girard, architect, in 1671. His wife died three years later, and Girard is then described as "architecte, entrepreneur de bâtimens de Monsieur, frère unique du Roy."<sup>2</sup> The Gardens, according to Piganiol, were laid out by Le Nôtre and he undoubtedly designed the greater part of them, but an engraving by Perelle of the "Trianon ou Pavillon de S. Cloud," which faced the parterre of the fountain of Venus, states that Le Sr. Gobert was the architect of the "Trianon" and also of the "Cascades," "qui s'y achèvent en cette année 1681." Gobert was in a different position from that of Girard, for he became an Academician in 1680, the year before Le Nôtre, and appears to have been connected with the official clique. He was probably related to the "Sieur Gobert," who appears in the "Comptes," 1675-84, as "Conseiller du Roy" and "Intendant alternatif des bâtimens du Roi" in receipt of 4,665 francs for three-quarters of his annual salary. A "Sr. Gobert fils" is mentioned in the "Comptes" in 1681 as having assisted his father the Intendant in the "ouvrages des Gressets,"<sup>3</sup> and it is possible that "Gobert fils" was actually the architect and Academician. In 1699 Gobert appears as an Academician "de la première classe," and he sedulously attended the meetings of the Academy till January 1708, after which he disappears from the list. His only contribution, however, to the Conferences was "un Traité pour la pratique des forces mouvantes," in December 1701, which was discussed by the Academy in connection with building processes. The only other reference I can find is in Piganiol de la Force's "Desc. de Paris."<sup>4</sup> In his account of the Convent of the Petits Pères he says that the Library consisted of two galleries and a principal piece,

<sup>1</sup> "Nouvelle Description," iv, 351-358. Piganiol de la Force says the house was designed by Le Pautre; two of the engravings say that Girard was the architect, but the evidence of the "Procès-Verbaux" of the Academy of Architecture is conclusive that Le Pautre was the architect.

<sup>2</sup> Herluison, "Actes d'État Civil," etc.

<sup>3</sup> "Comptes," i, 1351. Gobert the Intendant received 6,000 francs for two years' superintendence of these works, his son receiving 2,000 francs. What the "ouvrages" were does not appear. Herluison mentions a Michel Gobert, painter, and Pierre Gobert, painter and academician, who died in 1744, aged eighty-two.

<sup>4</sup> III, 114.



and that one of the galleries was designed by "Gobert architect du Roi qui avoit beaucoup de génie pour les beaux arts." The difficulty is that when a tradition existed and a more or less uniform manner of design prevailed, buildings were so much alike that they are often assigned "en masse" to the biggest name available. We are familiar with this in England in the buildings so freely assigned to Inigo Jones, Wren and other well-known architects on no better evidence than that the design of the buildings resembles their manner, and dates approximately from the time at which those architects lived.

Gabriel Le Duc is another shadowy figure, but he was associated with well-known men on important works. He is first heard of as engaged on the Church of the Val de Grâce under François Mansart and Lemercier, and on the latter's death in 1654 he and Le Muet completed the work, which included the dome and the greater part of the church and the adjoining buildings. In 1665 he received 1,500 francs "pour ses appointements," and 600 francs for the first four months of 1666, and as Le Muet's salary was only 1,000 francs<sup>1</sup> it is evident that Le Duc must have been held in considerable esteem. In the "Comptes" for 1669 there are entries of payments to Le Duc and Duval Boutet for additional masonry at the Val de Grâce, and to Le Duc alone "pour avoir vaqué a la conduite des ouvrages du principal autel de lad-église, 1,500 francs," and for a table of white marble supplied by him in the church of St. Germain L'Auxerrois.<sup>2</sup> These entries are puzzling, the more so as in succeeding years there are entries of payments to a Le Duc who was clearly a contractor pure and simple.<sup>3</sup> If "vaqué a la conduite" refers to the design of the high altar, which was certainly designed by Le Duc, Gabriel Le Duc must have combined the business of a contractor with his profession as an architect, and there is a good deal of evidence in the "Comptes" tending to prove that this was in fact sometimes done by the architects of Louis XIV. In modern practice it is the custom to separate the two entirely, the architect supplying the designs and specifications, for which and superintendence he receives a percentage on the cost of the buildings, the

<sup>1</sup> "Comptes," i, 166. Germain Brice, however ("Nouv. Desc.," iii, 109), says that when Mansart was superseded, "L'on mit a sa place La Muet, Architecte général de tout l'édifice et sous lui Gabriel Le Duc et Du Val," and that the three between them spoilt the design.

<sup>2</sup> "Comptes," iii, 239.

<sup>3</sup> *E.g.*, ii, 287. "Au Sr. Le Duc entrepreneur a compte des remuements de terre qu'il fait au grand aqueduc de Maintenon et Berchère," 773, 750 ff.

contractor supplying the capital, materials and labour, on which he makes his trade profit. Le Duc is said to have completed the church of S. Louis en l'Île after the death of Le Vau. He also continued the church of the Petite-Pères.<sup>1</sup> His design for the Hôtel Falconi and a house in the Rue S. Dominique were engraved by Marot. Germain Brice says that Le Duc "avoit de la pratique dans l'art de bâtir," and the high altar of the Val de Grâce, with its twelve columns and intricate detail, proves that he knew his business, but the dome of the church is fussy and fantastic, the tourelles at the angles are absurd, and the design is inferior to the earlier dome of the Sorbonne. Competent as these minor men undoubtedly were, no worthy successor of Lemercier and François Mansart appeared in France till we come to the Gabriels, father and son, in the following century.

Daniel Gittard was an original member of the Academy of Architecture, and though not in the first flight, which J. H. Mansart practically monopolized for himself, he was an architect of ability and some importance in his time. He was born at Blandy-en-Brie in 1625, and was the son of a Jean Gittard, a master carpenter, who is said to have worked at Vaux le Vicomte under Le Vau.<sup>2</sup> His principal work was the choir of the Church of S. Sulpice. Blondel says that a church had been built here in 1646 from the designs of a "Sieur Gamare, un des meilleurs architectes de son temps," but that this being too small, Anne of Austria laid the foundation stone of a new church in 1655, designed by Louis Le Vau, and that after the death of the latter in 1670 the work was entrusted to Daniel Gittard, who completed the choir, aisles, side chapels on the north side, and the north entrance.<sup>3</sup> It appears that

<sup>1</sup> This church was begun from designs by Le Muet in 1656, continued by Liberal Bruand and Le Duc, and completed in 1739 by Cartaud. See Blondel, "Arch. Franc.," iii, 20.

<sup>2</sup> In a list of artists of the Royal Houses there is an entry of payment of 500 livres to "Gitard, architecte pour ses gages" in 1656. He was in the royal employment, but is not known to have done any work for the King. Two Gittards, Daniel and Pierre, appear in the "Comptes," and there seems to be some confusion between these two men. Bauchal describes them as father and son, but this seems improbable as Pierre appears in 1670 as one of the "officers qui ont gages," with a salary of 400 francs per annum, whereas Daniel does not appear in the same capacity till 1673, when he is described as "autre architecte de S.M." with a salary of 500 francs, in the company of the younger Le Vau, Le Pautre, and Mignard. M. Guiffrey refers the entries for payments for attendance at the Academy from 1672-86 to Pierre. My impression is that they refer throughout to Daniel. The two men were probably cousins or brothers.

<sup>3</sup> The church was completed by Oppenord, Servandoni, and Chalgrin in successive stages.



the oval chapel of the Virgin at the extreme eastern end of the church had already been built from the designs of Le Vau up to the cornice. Gittard pointed out that it was much too small, and proposed to rebuild it, but the churchwardens declined the expense, and ultimately additional chapels were provided on the north and south sides. The high altar was placed at the western end of the choir, so that the clergy were all to the east of it and behind it, instead of the more usual arrangement. Blondel attributes the design of the interior of the church to Le Vau, and commends the "noblesse et régularité" of his Corinthian order, as compared with the "formes captieuses et tourmentées" introduced by Oppenord. It seems from this that Gittard only got a free hand on the exterior, and here he designed the lower order of the northern entrance, a fine Corinthian order spoilt by the exaggerated size of the windows on either side of the centre, and the very badly-placed niches high up under the entablature. Gittard also designed the western entrance of the Church of S. Jacques et S. Philippe du Haut Pas in 1675 in the Rue du Faubourg S. Jacques. His Doric order was considered to exhibit an "ordonnance régulière et une exécution assez correcte,"<sup>1</sup> but it was an exceedingly commonplace affair, and though Gittard was in repute as an architect, there is nothing in the least exciting about his work, and his taste and originality can be judged from his proposal to substitute the ridiculous "ordre François" for the Corinthian order of the aisles. Gittard designed a house for M. de Salvoie, Rue Tarane, Paris, a very ugly building of four storeys, engraved by Marot, and the Hôtel de la Meilleraie in the Rue de Sainte Père,<sup>2</sup> and a house for Lulli, the composer, at the angle of the Rue S. Anne and the Rue Neuve des Petite Champs. His most important works in the country were his alterations at Chantilly for Condé, and the complete remodelling and almost rebuilding of S. Maur for M. de Gourville, the friend of Fouquet and afterwards *Intendant* of M. le Prince. S. Maur was an early work of De L'Orme, designed for Cardinal Du Bellay,<sup>3</sup> and afterwards continued by Catherine de Medicis, but never completed. The inscription on Perelle's view says

<sup>1</sup> Blondel, ii, 74.

<sup>2</sup> Piganiol de la Force, "Desc. de Paris," viii, 294. Bauchal also attributes to Gittard the Hôtel de la Force or S. Simon in the rue Taranne, but P. de la Force says nothing as to this, merely remarking that fifty years before this house would have been considered beautiful. I note that Blondel took his description of S. Sulpice from Piganiol de la Force, who wrote in 1742. Blondel's "Architecture Française," appeared ten years later.

<sup>3</sup> See "History of French Architecture, 1494-1661," Blomfield, i, 77, for a description of De L'Orme's design.





LE CHATEAU DE ST. MAUR a 2 lieues de Paris, sur la Marne, près de Charenton-le-Pont, a été commencé à faire bâtir par le Cardinal du Bellay, Catholique de France, et Henri 4<sup>e</sup> le donna à la maison de Condé, et après avoir été inhabité pendant plus de 100 ans, entre M<sup>rs</sup> de Bouville, Intendant de M<sup>rs</sup> le Prince la augmenté des richesses, l'ouvrage, et fortifié de ses aides, et presque renouvelé le tout sur les desseins de M<sup>rs</sup> l'Intendant.

ENTRANCE

[Perelle



LE CHATEAU DE ST. MAUR du côté du jardin, conserve plus de son ancienne Architecture, que la façade de l'entrée, parce que cette partie n'estoit pas destinée à des Poudrons, mais le changement des croisées de l'entrée qui fait le s<sup>t</sup> c<sup>t</sup> d'aujourd'hui n'est point non seulement la façade, mais en rend les appartements commodes, et la salie qui étoit au milieu de la façade, aiant été changée, donne la facilité de voir de la cour dans le jardin, qui est du dessein de M<sup>rs</sup> le Nôtre, exécuté par le Sr. Rigolet.

GARDEN FRONT

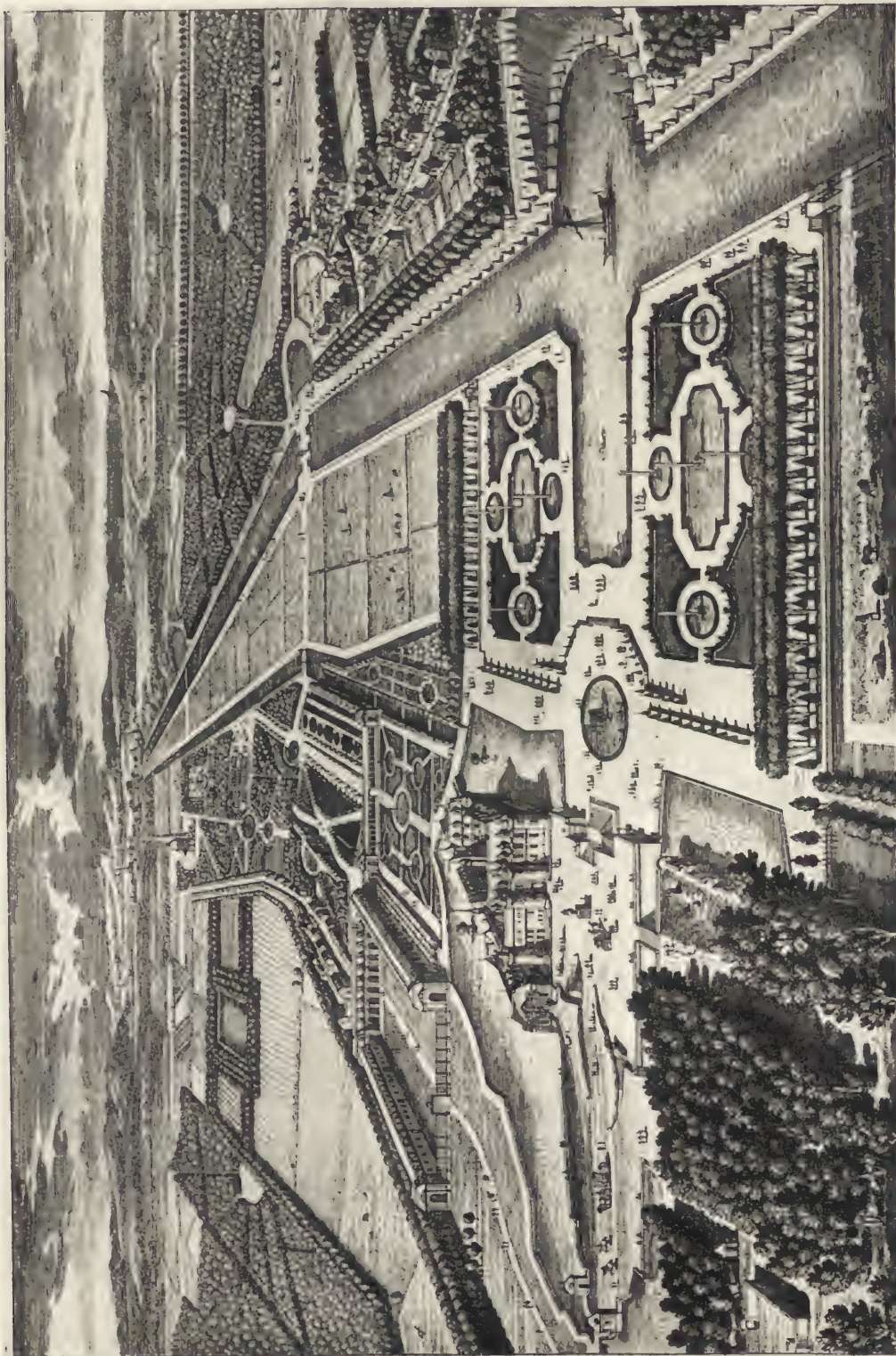
[Perelle

S. MAUR, DE L'ORME—ALTERED BY GITTARD (see p. 127)

(GARDENS BY LE NÔTRE)

[I. TO FACE P. 126





VUE GÉNÉRALE DE CHANTILLY du côté de l'Entrée

A Paris chez M. Barthelemy, rue de la Harpe, vis-à-vis l'École de Médecine.

[Profil]

CHANTILLY BEFORE THE ALTERATIONS BY MANSART (see p. 128)



that after having remained unfinished for one hundred years it was "presque renouvelé" for Gourville from the designs of Gittard. The great pediment which Du Cerceau had thought so "éclatante," and all the façade on the garden side was left, but Gittard added another pavilion, removed the central staircase in order to get a vista through from the forecourt to the gardens, and appears to have re-designed the whole of the garden front, doing away with what was left of De L'Orme's building on the side to the forecourt.<sup>1</sup> The gardens were designed by Le Nôtre. No date is given in Perelle's engraving, but it is probable that the work was completed before 1670.

Somewhere about that date Gittard was employed by the Grand Condé at Chantilly, and was at work here off and on till his death in 1686. M. Macon<sup>2</sup> says that he was employed on the architecture of the immense design for the gardens, begun by Le Nôtre in 1663, and that in 1673 Condé altered the approach to the Château by forming the "route du Connétable" and the new forecourt. The great stairs from this forecourt to the Garden, shown in the bird's-eye view, were designed by Gittard. Between 1683 and 1686 Mansart appeared on the scene, and, as usual, swept the board. Gittard appears to have remained in Condé's employment, but in a subordinate capacity, and it was Mansart who designed the orangery, transformed the interior of the petit château, and pretty well ruined the old château. It is possible that here and at Dijon, Gittard carried out designs supplied by Mansart. In 1679 Gittard consulted the Academy about a large reservoir he was constructing for Condé, and again in 1685 in regard to a design for a façade at Chantilly.<sup>3</sup> "The Company" thought the columns in this design too far apart, and that the attic ought to be altered to about one-third of the height of the order below. In March, 1686, he again consulted the Academy as to whether he should use coupled columns or single in each bay of a pavilion to the gallery. The Company, following François Blondel, advised a single column of the Doric instead of the Corinthian order. On two other occasions Gittard submitted his designs to the Academy. Early in 1685 he produced "un grand dessein" for the Palais du Roy (des Etats) at Dijon, begun in 1682. Mansart is said to have designed the grand vestibule and façade, and the question is, what was Gittard's share. It is possible that he gave the original designs and

<sup>1</sup> In De L'Orme's design given by Du Cerceau the plan was quadrangular enclosing an oblong court.

<sup>2</sup> "Chantilly," by Gustave Macon, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," ii, 109, 115.



that Mansart succeeded him on his death, but the whole question of his relations with Mansart is obscure.

In January, 1685, Louvois consulted the Academy as to what was to be done with Perrault's Arc de Triomphe du Trône, which was only partially built. Gittard produced measured drawings of the arch, and each member was instructed to prepare a design. These were then to be considered together, and out of them was to be made "un seul et unique dessein, du consentement de tous, qui seroit le dessein de l'Académie,"<sup>1</sup> about the most hopeless method of procedure it is possible to imagine, and it is characteristic of Louvois' brutal ignorance of the arts that he should have thought it possible to obtain a fine design by treating artists as he would have treated the clerks in his own office. Gittard seems to have been the only member who took up the design, but nothing came of it. Perrault's design was left unfinished, and Louvois and the King were already thinking of the aqueduct of Maintenon. Gittard died in December, 1686, leaving a son, who later became a member of the Academy. Neither of them were considerable architects, and I cannot find any ground for disputing M. Lemonnier's verdict: "Gittard est un architecte de second ordre: habile praticien sans doute, mais froid, sec et sans invention," a description which would apply to the majority of the architects of Louis XIV, and yet in nearly every case their work was redeemed by the fine technique of French architecture. Perhaps at no period in modern architecture has the value of tradition and of organized training been more clearly demonstrated. The French craftsmen, or to use the old-fashioned term, tradesmen, were masters of their trades. Architects could make no demands on their skill which they were unable to meet, whether it was some great feat of masonry and building, such as the pediment of the Louvre, or some piece of joinery or cabinet making so consummate that it rose to the level of fine art; and this skill they owed to a long tradition of admirable craftsmanship carefully nursed by Colbert, and given by him an unequalled opportunity on the Royal buildings. The debt owed by the architects of Louis XIV to their workmen can hardly be overrated; they started with advantages denied to modern architects, who have to do the best they can with the skill they can find in their men, and whose burdens in this regard were undreamt of by their predecessors. The architects of Louis XIV knew exactly what was expected of them, the range of their designs lay within well-recognized limits. Instead of

<sup>1</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," iii, 71.

the babel of modern architecture they had at their disposal one clear, concise idiom, and no other. Here, too, French architecture owed much to Colbert. His Academy concentrated energies that were in danger of being dissipated, it formulated definite canons of art, and as long as it was vital it insisted on a high standard of technical attainment. The architects of that time may have lacked a fine imagination, but at least they were never incompetent.



## CHAPTER X

### BRUAND, BULLET

IT had been the habit of the Guilds, especially in their later and degenerate days, to reserve their privileges almost exclusively to their members and their families. What had once been a valuable tradition of the building trade had become a mischievous monopoly, and De L'Orme claimed it as one of his chief services that he had set himself to break through this system. He was unwearied in pointing out the ignorance of builders both in design and construction, their bad workmanship, their wasteful ways, if not downright dishonesty, and he was under no illusion whatever as to their character and capacity. There can be little doubt that even in his day the Guilds had outlived their usefulness, and that architecture was already becoming too complex for any but trained architects to deal with. That class had completely established itself by the reign of Louis XIV as one of the recognized professions. Important buildings were no longer left to *Maîtres Jurés*. The latter were confined to their proper function of undertaking contracts in their several trades, and their control and superintendence were now definitely placed in the hands of trained professional architects. But monopoly was by no means exterminated, it was merely transferred to the architects. The tradition of hereditary callings was inveterate in the French *bourgeoisie*, and the strong family connections so formed created a monopoly not the less formidable because it was concealed from the public. The architects of the time of Louis XIV, at any rate the successful ones, were closely connected; they had behind them and around them, in the building officials and contractors in the Royal employment, a solid phalanx of kinsmen and connections which enabled them to take up a position in business not wholly dissimilar to that which had been so grossly abused by the



L'HOSPITAL DE LA SALPÊTRIERE, hors la Porte S<sup>t</sup> Martin, est une des principales dépendances de l'hôpital général de Paris, son nom vient de ce que l'on y faisoit autrefois le salpêtre. Ce Bâtimens fut commencé à rectifier magnifiquement en 1730 et par ordonnance du Roy du 10. 8<sup>me</sup> 1688. Les Pains y furent infirmes, & y ont nourris & entretenus un nombre d'environ 4.000.

Après Charles Mariette, en s'inspirant à la Victoire avec Privilège du Roy

[Perelle

LA SALPÊTRIERE, PARIS LIBERAL BRUANT (see p. 131)



LA PORTE S<sup>t</sup> MARTIN fut construite à la place de l'ancienne, l'on y a élevé 4 p<sup>rs</sup> de plus. L'ouverture du milieu a 18 p<sup>rs</sup> sur 40 et celle des Côtés ont 9 p<sup>rs</sup> sur 20 celle qui regarde la Ville fut achevée pendant la Conquête de la Franche-comté et la prise de Limbourg.

Après Charles Mariette, en s'inspirant à la Victoire avec Privilège du Roy

[Perelle

PORTE S. MARTIN. PIERRE BULLET (see p. 138)

[1. TO FACE P. 130





*Maîtres Jurés.* The families of D'Orbay, Gabriel, Hardouin, Mansart and De Cotte are well known examples. These families intermarried or allied themselves to the families of Court painters, sculptors or engravers, and must have formed a rather pleasant artistic circle of their own, a circle, however, jealously guarded against the entrance of outsiders.

Liberal Bruand is a case in point. Born about 1635, he was the son of Sebastian Bruand, "Général des Bâtiments et des Ponts et Chaussées de France," and M. Lemonnier suggests that he may have been the grandson of a Bruand, master carpenter, mentioned in 1620.<sup>1</sup> Liberal's wife was a daughter of a Michel Noblet, "architecte de bâtiments du Roi and maître des œuvres," and of Catherine Villedo, and was through her mother a granddaughter of one of the Villedos, the most successful builders and speculators in Paris in the seventeenth century. The elder brother of Liberal Bruand, Jacques (1664), was architect of the Duc d'Orléans in 1651, and "l'architecte du Roi" in 1653. Another brother was an *avocat*, another a priest. Of his sisters one married an *avocat*, another a *procureur au Châtelet*, and the third an officer in charge of the household of Monsieur.<sup>2</sup> His nephew (son of Jacques) became a Member of the Academy of Architecture in 1699, and another nephew, François, became an Academician in 1706, and when his son married in 1705 among those present were J. H. Mansart, R. de Cotte, Vincent de Beau, Treasurer-General of the Gardes Françaises, and a brother who was a second lieutenant in the Regiment of Piedmont. "Nous avons là un excellent type de famille de bonne bourgeoisie Parisienne."<sup>3</sup>

Bruand's first important work was the Hospital of La Salpêtrière, begun in 1656 and completed in 1668 as an asylum, or rather work-house, to house 4,000 inmates.<sup>4</sup> It is a huge building treated in a practical manner, and by no means lacking in architectural quality. The grouping of the church with the rest of the building shows a grasp of composition absent from most modern institutions designed for a similar purpose. It appears that in 1662 Bruand designed a house at

<sup>1</sup> "Procès-Verbaux de l'Académie Royale d'Architecture," vol. i, *Introd.*, p. xxxi. This description of Sebastian Bruand occurs in the entry of his death (Register of S. Paul), 1670 (Herluison). It is not found in the "Comptes," in which in the year 1670 Sebastian Bruand is merely described as "maître des œuvres de charpenterie." His wife, who died in 1667, was Barbe Biard, probably a relation of the sculptor.

<sup>2</sup> Lemonnier, "Procès-Verbaux," vol. i, p. xxxii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Even now the hospital has 3,778 beds. Piganiol de la Force, writing in the middle of the eighteenth century, says it housed 7,800 persons.



Richmond for the Duke of York, and that this was actually built, though nothing seems to be known of its history. It is described as a large building, 222 feet long by 168 feet on plan, in two storeys with a Doric order below and an Ionic order above. In 1707 one of the two younger Bruands exhibited a plan and elevations of this house to the Academy.<sup>1</sup>

In 1663 Bruand was appointed one of the "architectes du Roi," and he was an original member of the Academy of Architecture, receiving his first fee for attendance in 1672. He also received 500 francs per annum as one of the "officiers qui ont gages" and 1,200 francs as "maistre des œuvres de charpenterie pour avoir l'œil sur tous les charpentiers des maisons royales,"<sup>2</sup> apparently having succeeded his father Sebastian, who died in 1670. In 1675 he was entrusted with the vast work of the Hôtel de Mars ou des Invalides, that splendid hospital which Louis XIV had built for "les estropiez vieux et caducs."<sup>3</sup> Bruand's scheme consisted of a large central court, 290 feet by 190 feet, known as the "Cour Royale," with two smaller courts, each 138 feet by 120 feet, on either side of it. On the further side of the "Cour Royale," opposite the entrance, Bruand placed his church, a considerable building, 192 feet long by 72 feet wide.<sup>4</sup> On either side of this church, and separated from it by long narrow courts, were large projecting enclosures of low buildings, that to the east side containing the infirmaries, with six courts, that on the west side a priests' garden, with a *berceau* or arched walk in trellis and miscellaneous outbuildings. The scheme was in fact symmetrical and uniform in treatment, the only variation being that the "Cour Royale" had two lofty arcaded galleries running round the sides of the court and very elaborate lucarnes, whereas the rest of the main buildings were in four

<sup>1</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," iii, 281-2.

<sup>2</sup> "Comptes," 1658. The next entry to this is a similar payment to François Villedot de Clement, either an uncle or cousin of Bruand.

<sup>3</sup> The Edict of foundation of the Hôtel des Invalides, dated 1674, recites "qu'il estoit bien raisonnable que ceux qui ont exposé librement leur vie, et prodigué leur sang pour la defense et soutien de cette monarchie . . . jouissent du repos qu'ils ont assuré a nos autres sujets, et passaient le reste de leurs jours en tranquillité" (Description general by Le Jeune de Boulencourt, 1683). The admirable engravings by Jean Marot and Pierre Le Pautre in this great folio are badly folded. The plates of Mansart's church must have been made from the model, as the church itself was not completed till some twenty-five years after 1683, and Marot died between 1680 and 1683. See "Privilege du Roi" at the end of the description.

<sup>4</sup> Mansart's church, or the Church of the Dôme, was added on to the further end of Bruand's Church, the two being separated by the high altar of Mansart's church.

storeys with dormers to the roofs. On either side of the "Cour Royale" were ranged the refectories for soldiers, with separate mess rooms for the officers, and on the outer side of the four smaller courts were ranged the soldiers' rooms with a central corridor. The Governor's residence occupied the left-hand end of the entrance front, the resident doctor occupying quarters at the opposite end, each with their separate offices and stables. Bruand, evidently a very practical man, made ample provision for staircases all over the building, and taking into account the state of medical practice at the time, the general scheme appears to me to have been very able. The arrangement of the infirmary was delightfully straightforward, the wards for the patients consisting of long corridors about 22 feet wide running round the outer side of the courts, the two corridors dividing the four courts intersecting in the centre with a wide octagon space at the junction. By this means cross ventilation was obtained throughout, one side only of the infirmary, being separated by a corridor, and devoted to the various offices of the nursing sisters. The hospital, being well out in the country, as Paris then was,<sup>1</sup> had to be complete in itself. Ample cellars were provided, and the whole of the fourth floor, with trifling exceptions, was given up to granaries for the storage of corn. The Invalides had its own water supply, "un grand puits<sup>2</sup> avec une machine," worked by three mules, which supplied a large lead cistern from which the water was conducted by lead pipes to the different parts of the building. From the practical point of view Bruand's scheme was excellent. When we come to the elevations, his shortcomings as an artist are evident. He cut up his façades with too many string-courses.<sup>3</sup> The one between the first and second floor spoils his proportions, and the fantastic lucarnes treated as casques, armlets, and headpieces, show a want of restraint and a lack of that "goût" on which the Academy of Architecture insisted so strongly, and which they must have found deplorably lacking in this work of one of their original members. Bruand's worst venture in original design was the prodigious archway 42 feet<sup>4</sup> wide above the principal entrance, an archway carrying nothing at all and breaking the

<sup>1</sup> The bird's-eye view shows open fields between the Invalides and the Tuileries on the further side of the river, and no buildings at all on the south side.

<sup>2</sup> The well was taken 10 feet below the bed of the river to a depth of 63 feet, and lined with stone. Behind this stone lining 500 or 600 cartloads of flints were thrown for the purpose of filtering the water.

<sup>3</sup> Horizontal bands, moulded or plain.

<sup>4</sup> The dimensions given in the text are taken by scale from the plates in the "Description Générale."



line of the roof in the most unpleasant way. What makes it all the worse is that the arch itself is stilted, and is, as it were, squeezed forward in front of the building, developing outwards out of the plane of the main façade. Within the framing of this archway is a composition in two storeys having no relation to any other part of the design, and surmounted by the inevitable equestrian statue of Louis XIV, directing the world at large. Elsewhere in the building Bruand showed that he possessed a real instinct for simplicity and a sense of scale, but in his entrance front to the Invalides he overreached himself, and disfigured what is in many ways a very fine design. Mansart, who supplanted him at the Invalides, ignored his predecessor when he added his meaningless and vainglorious Church of the Dôme. Had Mansart's original idea been carried out he would have entirely concealed the south front of the Invalides by throwing out pavilions on the south side and again taking curved peristyles outward from these pavilions to two further advanced pavilions at a considerable distance south of his church. Mansart never showed the least consideration for his colleagues or for their works if they stood in the way of his own interests.<sup>1</sup>

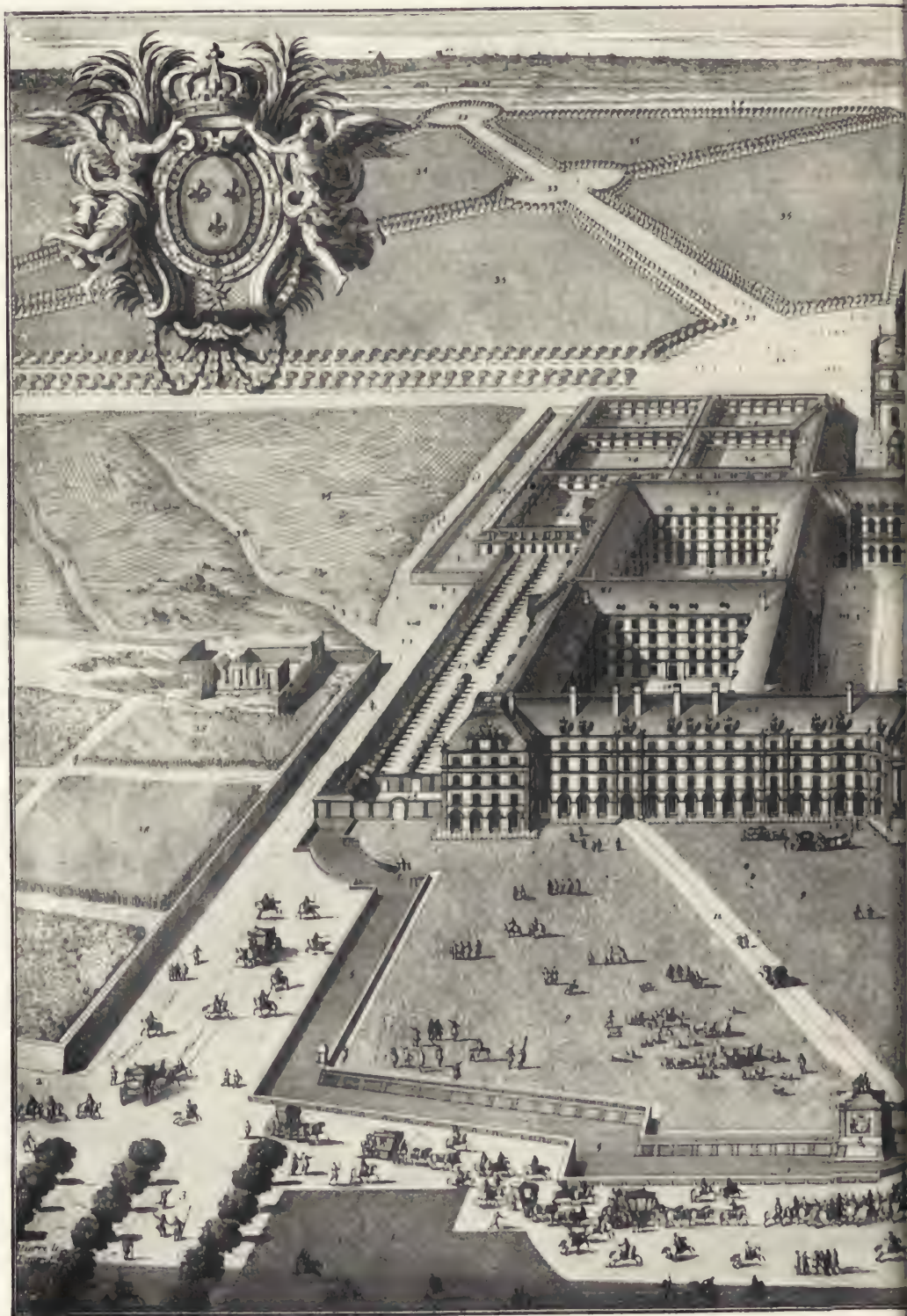
The Hospitals of La Salpêtrière and Les Invalides go a little way to discount Saint-Simon's censure on Louis XIV for having done so little for Paris. The great scale and complete equipment of these two foundations show that the King, at any rate in the earlier years of his reign, was anxious to do something for his people—but after the death of Colbert he fell into the hands of inferior men, and lost touch of what may have been the fine enthusiasm of his younger days. With the exception of the two Places formed in Paris as a compliment to himself, the Invalides represents the last serious effort at any great public improvement in Paris made by Louis XIV.

Bruand is said to have made the first designs for the Place Vendôme, subsequently designed by J. H. Mansart, and he is known to have been one of the succession of architects employed on the Church of the Petits-Pères, where, according to Blondel, he carried on the building from the foundations constructed under Le Muet to a height of 7 feet above the ground. Over the crossing he proposed to place a dome, but this scheme was not carried out, and an elliptical vault was formed here instead. Probably before 1675 he made a most elaborate design for the frontispiece of the "Maison et Bureau" of the Merchant Drapers of Paris. This was engraved by Marot, and was much admired

<sup>1</sup> Mansart's scheme is shown in a plate accompanying Félibien's "Description de l'Eglise Royale des Invalides."

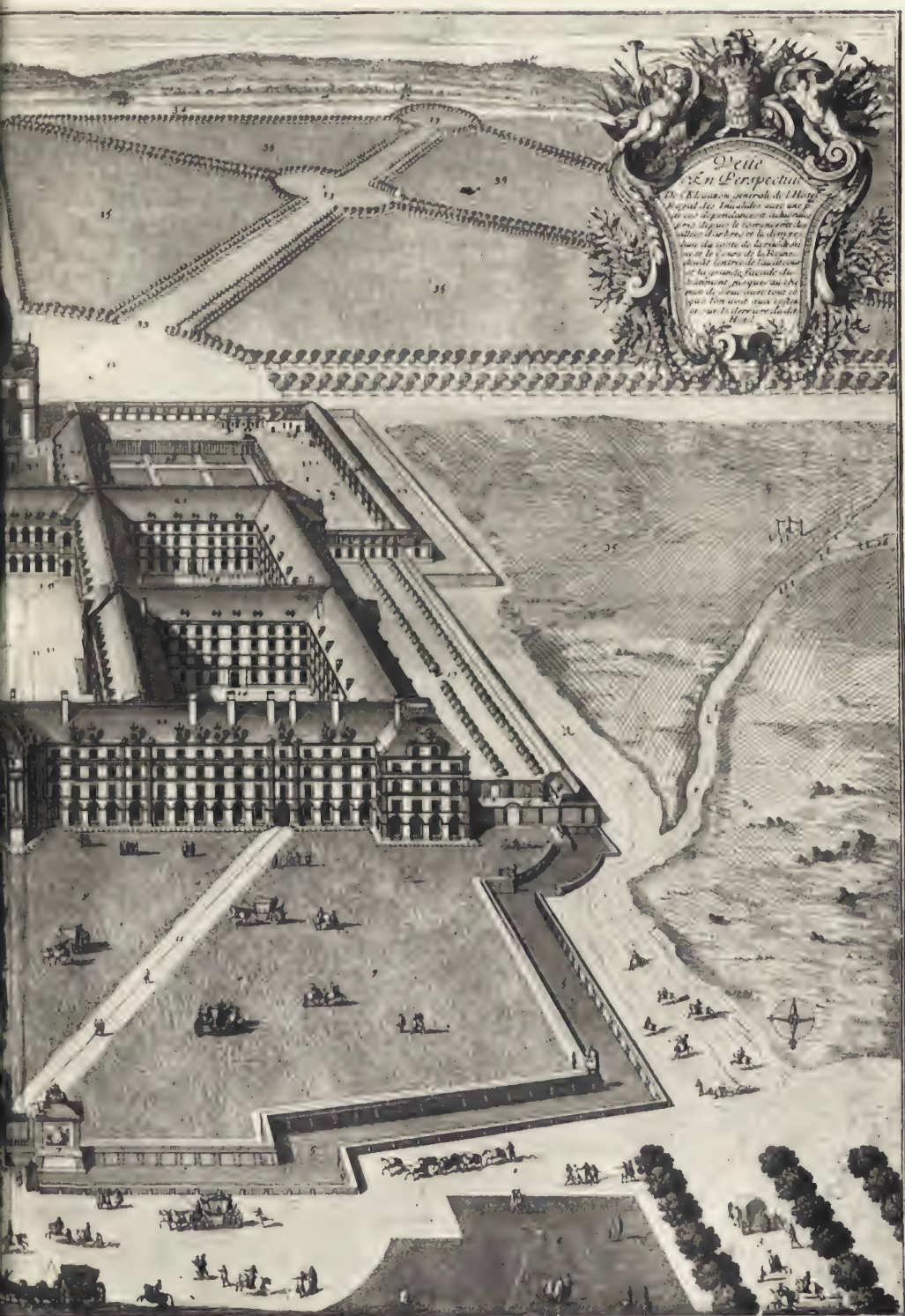






BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE HÔTEL DES INVALIDES. LIBERAL BRUANID AND J  
 (FROM THE "DES

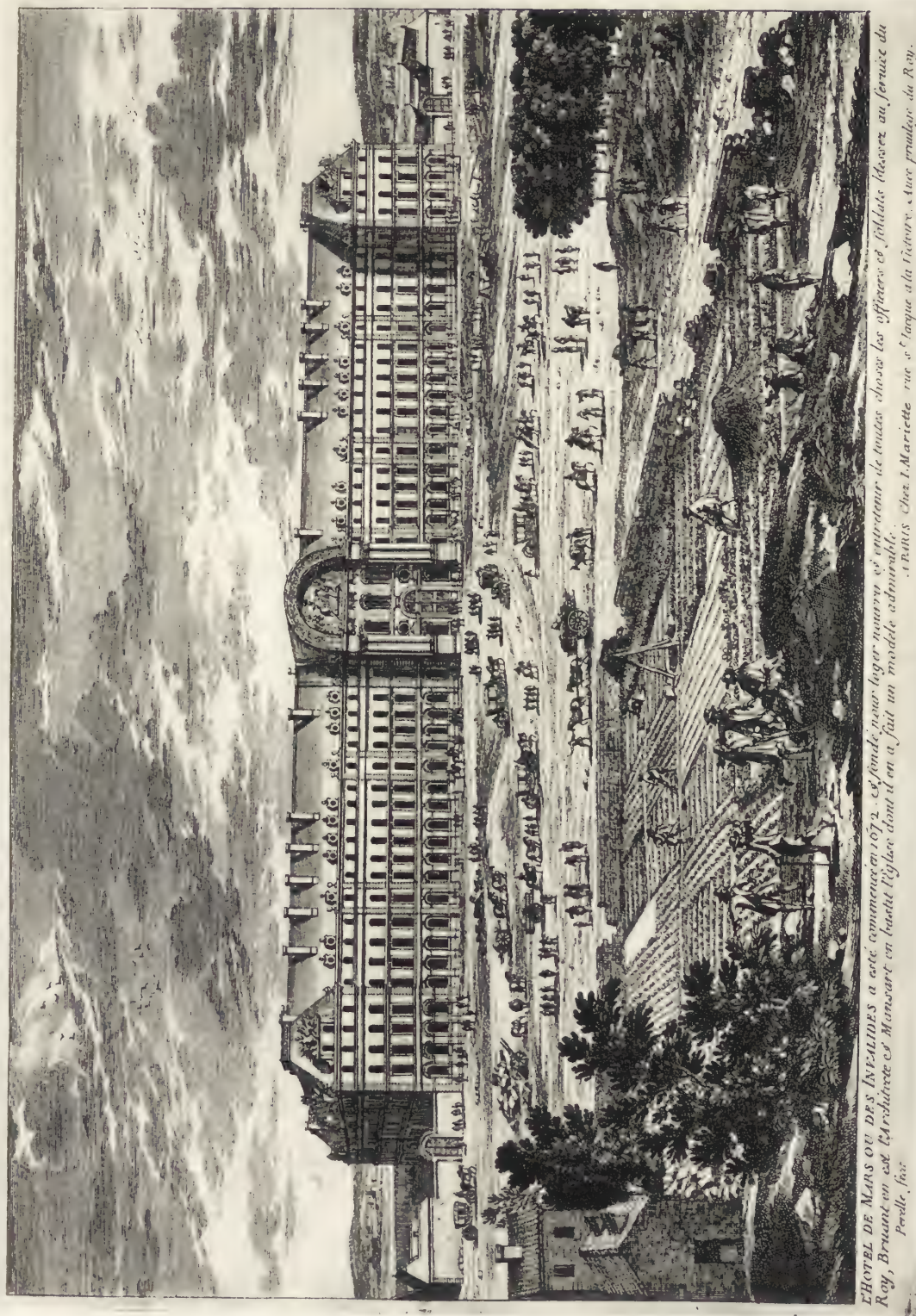




MANSART. DRAWN AND ENGRAVED BY PIERRE LE PAUTRE (see pp. 132-4)  
TION GÉNÉRALE")





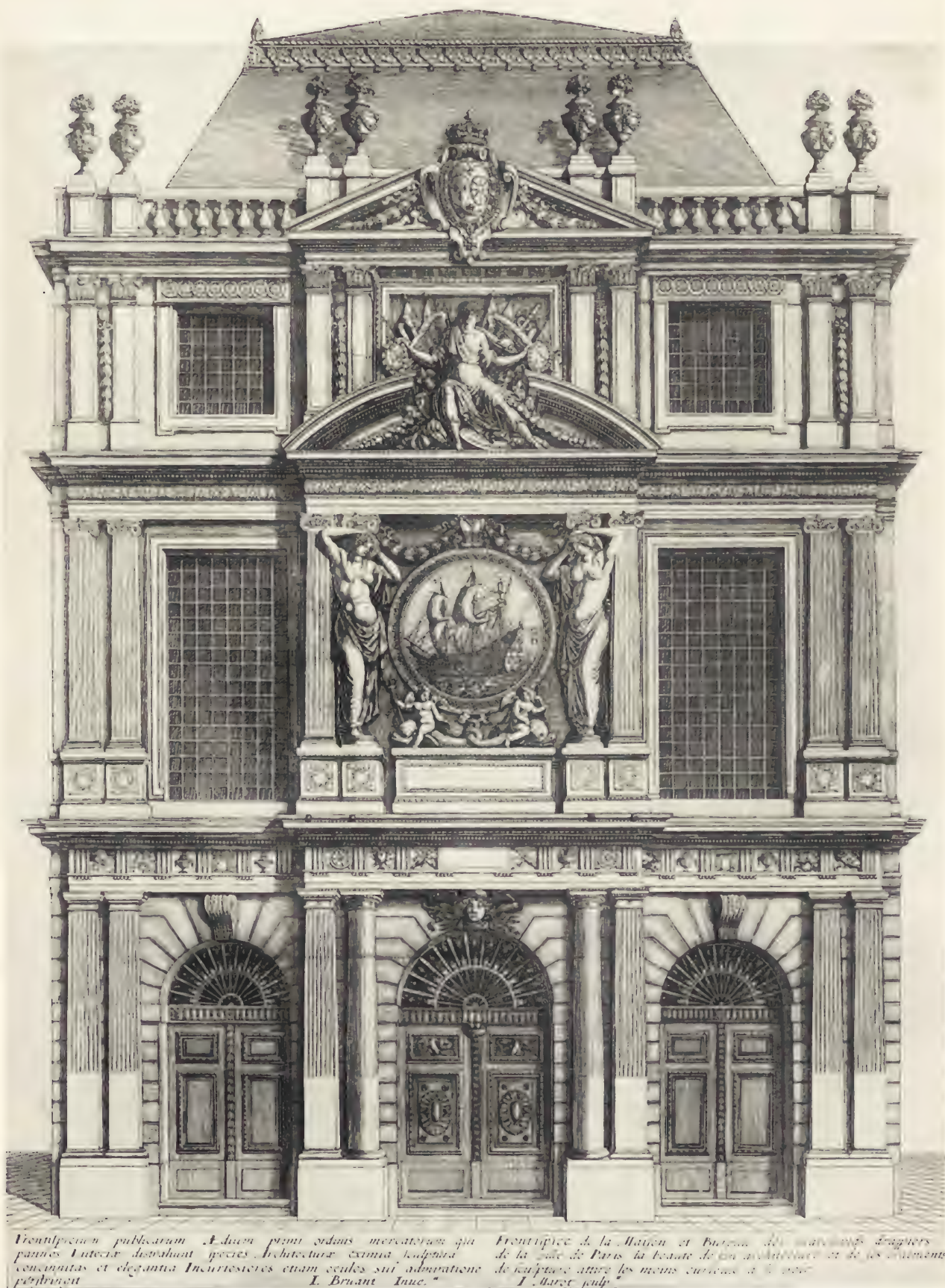


L'HOTEL DE MARS OU DES INVALIDES a été commencé en 1672, et fondé pour loger nos braves, et entretenir de toutes choses les officiers et soldats blessés au service du Roy, Bruant en est l'architecte et Mansart en buste l'égise dont il en a fait un modèle admirable. Chez L. Mariette rue de l'Académie au Palais National. Avec privilège du Roy.  
Peelle fecit

HÔTEL DES INVALIDES, LIBERAL BRUANT (see p. 133)

[Profile





THE HALL OF THE MERCHANT DRAPERS. L. BRUANT (p. 135)

(Now re-erected in the garden court of the Musée Carnavalet)



by the populace on account of its singular and exuberant detail and the excellence of its sculpture, but it was a bad and even foolish design, the whole of the centre above the entrance bay was blocked by the sculpture, and to compensate for this Bruand had to make the windows on either side of it of disproportionate width. Moreover, he made the mistake that Lemercier had made at the Louvre, of crowding a triangular pediment on the top of a broken segmental one, and the front is so plastered over with orders and entablatures that there was scarcely a piece of plain wall surface in the whole of the front. The detail in itself may have been accomplished enough, but, as Blondel was never tired of insisting, it is not the detail that makes architecture, but the way the detail is put together, and when all this detail produces "un tout hors de proportion,"<sup>1</sup> and when the sculpture, however excellent, has little or no relation to the purpose of the building, the faults of the design as a whole are merely accentuated. Piganiol de la Force, who wrote about the same time as Blondel, considered the architecture to be "d'un très bon goût," and his only complaint was that the whole of it had been covered with a coat of paint. "L'ignorance grossiere des ouvriers ou plutôt des barbouilleurs avides de gain a gâté et gâte encore tour les jours dans cette ville des Sculptures très excellentes."<sup>2</sup>

In spite of his reputation (Blondel says he was considered one of the best architects of the seventeenth century), Bruand does not appear to have designed many buildings, and after the arrival of Mansart his practice, in common with that of other of his colleagues, seems to have disappeared. He attended the Conferences of the Academy with unfailing regularity, and one hears of him submitting a design for the Pont de la Charité (Cosne, Nièvre), and reporting on the Abbey Church of Jouy, in which one of the pillars had buckled. Bruand proposed to shore up the building, rebuild the pillar with old stone, and tie in the vaulting of the aisles. He made certain suggestions as to the position of columns at angles to avoid breaking the entablature, "ce qui seroit une chose vicieuse." In 1687 he consults the Academy as to the possibility of a canal round Paris, on the lines of that at Strasbourg, but the Academy pointed out that whereas at

<sup>1</sup> "Arch. Franc.," iii, 6. Blondel gives some interesting criticism on the use of pilasters here and in works by F. Mansart, Salomon de Brosse, and Le Vau.

<sup>2</sup> "Desc. Hist. de la ville de Paris," ii, 176, ed. 1765. The building, which stood in the rue des Déchargeurs, was pulled down in 1868 to form the rue des Halles, and the façade was re-erected in the garden of the Musée Carnavalet.



Strasbourg there was a fall of 5 feet in 180 feet, the fall in the Seine at Paris was only 1 inch in 600 feet, according to levels taken by His Majesty's orders. From time to time Bruand contributed papers on technical points, such as the height of pedestals to statues, foundations on slippery ground (1683), and the use of grilles in foundations (1684). He showed a design for a wooden bridge of five arches instead of fourteen to connect the Isle de la Cité to the western end of the Isle S. Louis, which the Academy discussed at length. In 1691 Bruand's design for a bridge at Moulins is preferred by the Academy to those of Le Sr. Matthieu and Le Frère Romain. The Academy went into these matters carefully, but it does not appear that any of Bruand's designs were carried out. His last attendance at the Academy was on April 19th, 1694. On the 21st of that month Villacerf ordered the Academy to stop its conferences and its teaching. The Academy at once offered to continue them gratuitously. The offer was graciously accepted, but the attendance dwindled to three or four, of whom one was De la Hire, the Professor of Architecture, and another, the Secretary, Félibien.

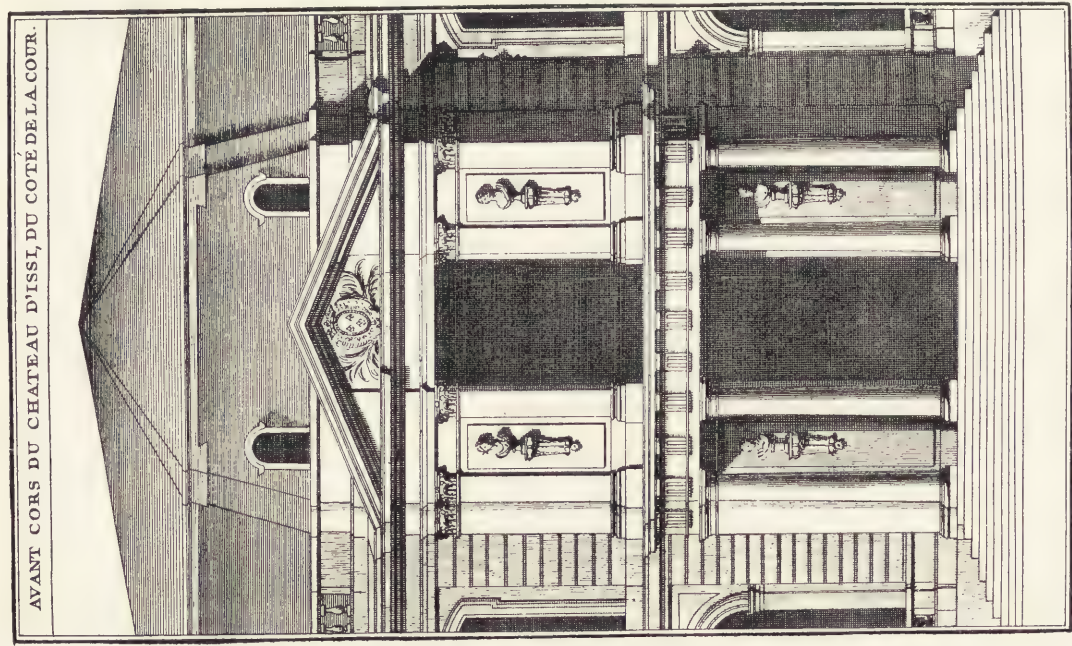
Bruand died in November, 1697. In spite of his early reputation he had not been very successful. After he had been elbowed out by Mansart he did little work, and was in difficulties when he died. His debts amounted to over 100,000 francs. These were liquidated by the sale of his offices as "Conseiller, Secrétaire du Roi Maison Couronne de France et de ses finances, architecte ordinaire des Bastimens de sa Majesté," and of his personal belongings.<sup>1</sup> The inventory of his property included a small quantity of silver plate, and in the stables two black horses and "un carosse dont le fond est de velour cramoisi." Bruand seems to have lived in some state, but in the last few years of his life got more and more into debt, borrowing from all sorts of people—architects, contractors, the Controller-General of Artillery, his doctor, the director of posts at Valenciennes, and the "Lieutenant Criminal au Bailliage de Mantes."<sup>2</sup> The fact was that, during the period of Mansart's predominance, lasting for nearly thirty years, his colleagues had little

<sup>1</sup> See "Nouvelles Archives de l'art Franc.," iv, 1883, 190-198 for a complete statement of Bruand's creditors and affairs.

<sup>2</sup> The introductory note in the "Nouvelles Archives" speaks of forty-one creditors, only nineteen are mentioned in the Procès-Verbal. The sums named amount to 118,081 livres, exclusive of the amounts due to certain creditors, such as that of De Lespine "architecte ordinaire des Bâtimens du Roi," which are not filled in ("Nouvelles Archives de l'art Franc.," 1878, pp. 100-107).

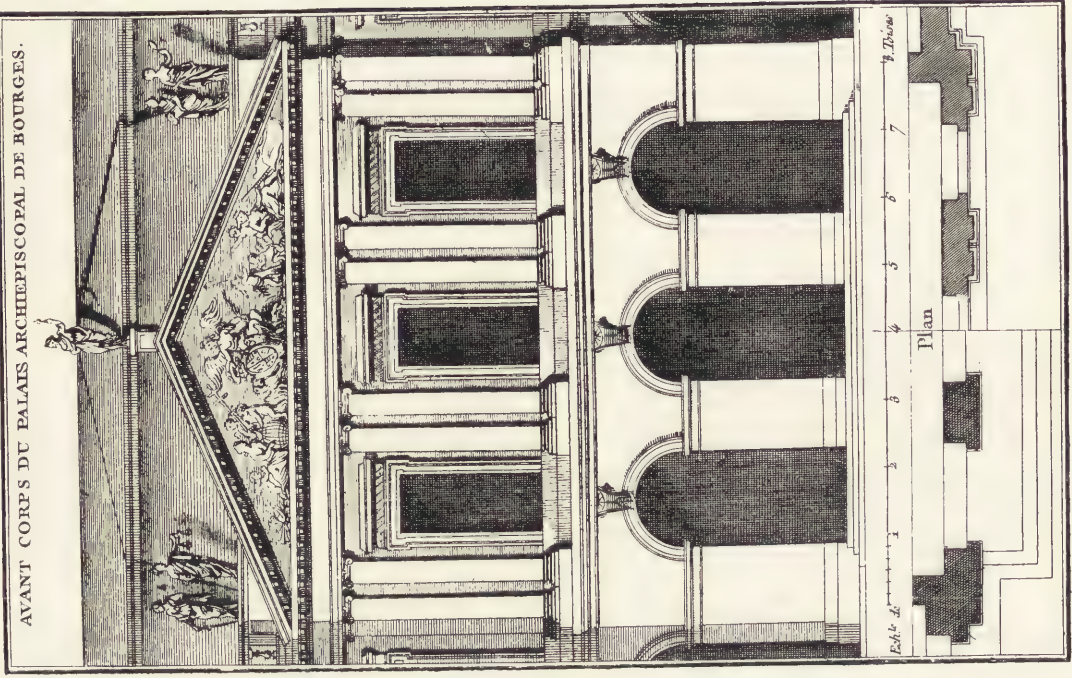






FRONTISPIECE, CHÂTEAU D'ISSI. BULLET (see p. 145)

(FROM J. F. BLONDEL, "COURS D'ARCHITECTURE," VOL. VIII)



FRONTISPIECE OF ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE AT BOURGES. BULLET (see p. 142)

chance of showing what they could do, and Daviler was so disgusted that he left Paris altogether. Bruand seems to have been a capable man of affairs, but his abilities were those of the business man rather than those of the artist. Yet even so, he was not sufficiently astute, or may have been too honest a man to maintain his position in the face of unscrupulous rivals. He fell out of fashion and seems to have lost his practice during the last fifteen or twenty years of his life, and to have made his position worse by indulging in unfortunate speculation, a weakness common with French architects in the eighteenth century. It was financial disaster that terminated the architectural career of Mansart, Comte de Sagone, a grandson of the great Jules Hardouin, seventy years later.<sup>1</sup>

Pierre Bullet was more fortunate. Throughout his long and active career, he maintained his place in the front rank of the architects of his time, and wrote a book on the practice of architecture which remained a standard work down to the days of the French Revolution. Germain Brice, a contemporary, describes him as "Renommé dans sa profession," and Piganiol de la Force, a little later, usually introduces his name with such phrases as "Architecte habile," "fameux Architecte," "un des Architectes du Roi des plus habiles du siècle dernier," "qui avoit la reputation d'être un des meilleurs architectes de son temps."<sup>2</sup> Blondel even placed him next after François Mansart, François Blondel and Perrault as one of the foremost architects of France,<sup>3</sup> and D'Argenville assigned him "un rang distingué dans son art." Yet in spite of his undoubted reputation in the early part of the seventeenth century, he is now little more than a name, and the only individual trait that one can detect in his works is a strong instinct for scientific construction, no doubt developed in his younger days by his connection with the elder Blondel and later by the influence of De la Hire. Pierre Bullet was born in 1639, and, it has been suggested, was the son of a master mason whose name occurs in 1608. He first appears as an assistant of François Blondel, in the Porte S. Bernard, 1670, and the Porte S. Denis in 1672. In 1673 he was paid 450 francs for drawings for the

<sup>1</sup> Jacques Hardouin Mansart, Sieur de Lévi and Comte de Sagone, grandson of Jules Hardouin. He became an Academician in 1735. He had to stay in the Temple for over two years and a half to avoid being arrested for debt. Writing to Marigny in 1766, he says: "Qui eût jamais pu penser que le petit fils d'un Surintendant des Bastimens du Roi, sans avoir aucunement démenti, sans aucun dérangement d'ailleurs, se fut trouvé après tant de veilles et de travail et un tel bien acquis, dans une pareille position."

<sup>2</sup> "Desc. Hist. de Paris," viii, 139, and elsewhere.

<sup>3</sup> Blondel, "Cours d'Architecture," iii, 83.



use of the students in the Academy of Architecture, no doubt made for Blondel. It is possible that some of these drawings were afterwards used as illustrations to François Blondel's "*Cours d'Architecture*." About this date (1673-5) François Blondel had prepared a plan of Paris, or rather the plan had been made by Bullet under Blondel's direction,<sup>1</sup> and Blondel, who appears to have been consulting architect to the city of Paris, had drawn up a scheme which, by arrangement with Pelletier, "Provost des Marchands et Messieurs les eschevins," was to be carried out by "le Sr. Bulet, dessinateur et appareilleur habile que je leur avois donné."<sup>2</sup>

In 1676 Bullet appears to have been appointed official architect of the city of Paris, and is so described in the plan of Paris prepared by order of the King.<sup>3</sup> Bullet's first original work seems to have been the Porte S. Martin, erected in 1674 by the citizens of Paris, to commemorate the conquest of la Franche Comté and the defeat of the armies of Germany, Spain, and Holland in 1674, "par la force, la bonne conduite et le bonheur des armées de Sa Majesté."<sup>4</sup> Blondel composed the inscriptions, and I quote one as a fine swaggering piece of Latin, very characteristic of the time:

Ludovico Magno  
Vesontione Sequanisque  
Bis Captis  
Et fractis Germanorum  
Hispanorum et Barbarorum  
Exercitibus  
Praef. et Aedil. Poni  
CC<sup>5</sup>  
Anno R. S. H.<sup>6</sup> MDCLXXIV.

There was no false modesty about Louis XIV. The Porte S. Martin is rather a stupid design, the rustications are monstrous, and the sprawling

<sup>1</sup> "Levé tres exactement par le Mesme Bulet sous ma conduite." Blondel, "*Cours d'Architecture*," ii, 603.

<sup>2</sup> In the second edition of 1698 the reference to Bullet was omitted.

<sup>3</sup> "Plan de Paris levé par ordre du Roi et par les soins de Messieurs les prévôt des marchands et échevins par le Sieur Bullet, architecte du roi et de la ville sous la conduite de M. Blondel, Maréchal de Camp." Quoted by M. Lemonnier, "*Procès-Verbaux de l'Acad. d'Arch.*," vol. ii, p. xxii. This plan (1676) showed the existing state of Paris, and the public works already begun by order of the King.

<sup>4</sup> François Blondel, "*Cours d'Architecture*," ed. 1698, ii, 612-16. Blondel, who gives in full the inscriptions composed by himself, makes no reference to Bullet's work, nor does he give any details of the Porte S. Martin, though he describes at length the Porte S. Antoine, the Porte S. Bernard, and the Porte S. Denis designed by himself.

<sup>5</sup> Curaverunt.

<sup>6</sup> Reparatae Salutis humanae.

sculpture occupying the whole space between the central arch and the angle pier shows that neither the architect nor his sculptors<sup>1</sup> had much sense of the limitations and right relations of their arts. The younger Blondel remarked on its "pesanteur" as compared with the masculine vigour of François Blondel's design for the Porte S. Denis, and it is inferior to the latter from every point of view.<sup>2</sup> In 1675-6 Bullet designed the Quai Pelletier, an important public improvement on the north bank of the river opposite the Pont Nôtre Dame. Bullet distinguished himself here by some bold construction. According to D'Argenville,<sup>3</sup> in order to avoid pulling down any houses or encroaching on the river, he supported a street, 24 feet wide, and a footway, 6 feet wide, on a quadrant arch. His design was attacked as unsafe, but Colbert supported him, and the scheme went through, and was noted by Brice, Piganiol de la Force and D'Argenville as an amazing feat of construction, so amazing, indeed, that D'Argenville's description is unintelligible. On Perelle's plate, showing the Pont Nôtre Dame and the Quai Pelletier, the description is "La Banquette pour les Gens de pied est suspendue sur une portion de voute, qui va terminer dans la première arche de le Pont par une grande Trompe appareillée avec beaucoup d'artifice." Blondel again provided the inscription:

Hanc ripam  
Foedam nuper et inviam  
Nunc publicum iter et ornamentum urbis  
F. C. C.  
Praef. et Ædil

and remarks that anyone who had known the disgusting state of the river bank here would realize the justice of his inscription. The real credit of this work was due to Colbert. The King had already lost interest in Paris, but so long as he was able Colbert did all he could to further public improvements. Blondel mentions the Quai Malaquais, which had been formed in 1670. In the same year the *enceinte* of Paris had been extended, and in 1671 the Bastion S. Antoine was reconstructed with a retaining wall, so that it formed a public promenade

<sup>1</sup> Desjardins, Marsy, Le Hongre, and Pierre Le Gros.

<sup>2</sup> Blondel gives the dimensions as 53 feet 7 inches wide by 53 feet 1 inch high, the centre arch 16 feet 2 inches wide, and 30 feet 1 inch high. The side arches are just half these dimensions, a somewhat rudimentary method of proportions.

<sup>3</sup> See D'Argenville, "Vies," i, 371. Brice, "Nouv. Desc.," ii, 137, says Bullet found the means "de mettre cet ouvrage en l'air," and that the Journal des Savans in 1676 spoke of it "comme d'une entreprise tout a fait extraordinaire." See also Piganiol de la Force, "Desc. Hist. de Paris," iv, 89-90.



over 2,400 feet long, with four rows of elms, the central avenue 60 feet wide, and the two smaller ones 20 feet<sup>1</sup> wide. Had Colbert had his way there is little doubt that he would have largely remodelled Paris and done in the seventeenth century what Haussmann did in a very uninteresting way two hundred years later. Among certain receipts of artists in the reign of Louis XIV<sup>2</sup> there is one from Pierre Bullet, "architecte du Roi et de la Ville de Paris," to the Receiver of the City of Paris for 300 livres for services rendered to the Provost and Echevins. Unfortunately the receipt does not say what these services were.

Bullet is next heard of as designing two chapels in the Church of S. Germain des Près. According to Piganiol de la Force, the Chapel of S. Marguerite was decorated "magnificently" from Bullet's designs in 1675, that of S. Casimir in 1683.<sup>3</sup> In the latter year he designed the church of the "Noviciat Général des Dominicains réformés." Piganiol de la Force says that the church was well lit and finely designed by Bullet, "qui non seulement avoit la reputation d'être un des meilleurs architectes de son temps, mais que même a parfaitement bien reussi dans ce bâtiment."<sup>4</sup>

In 1685 Louvois nominated Bullet as a member of the Academy in virtue of his office as an "architecte du Roi." For once in a way the official minutes of the Academy display some little feeling, and record that the nomination "a fort resjouy la compagnie," both on account of the merits of the Sieur Bullet, and also because it showed that "Le Seigneur de Louvois" had a care for the Academy and showed by this selection his intention to protect it. A week later Bullet was received by the Company "avec beaucoup de plaisir."<sup>5</sup> This mark of approval was unusual, and Bullet must have enjoyed a high reputation at the time. He took up his nomination with much ardour and duly submitted designs to the Academicians for their approval. In 1685 he presented plans and elevations of a bridge to be built at La Ferté Sous Jouarre on a single arch; three months later he submitted a design for this or another bridge at La Ferté in wood. The Academy made certain suggestions, such as that the timbers should not exceed

<sup>1</sup> Blondel, "Cours d'Arch.," ii, 609. The porte S. Antoine originally built from designs by Metezeau, with sculpture by Goujon, was remodelled by François Blondel. It was destroyed in 1777.

<sup>2</sup> "Nouvelles Archives de l'Art Franc.," iv, 1876, p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> The monument to Casimir, King of Poland (1672), by Gaspar Marsy was put up in this Chapel.

<sup>4</sup> "Desc. Hist. de Paris," viii, 139.

<sup>5</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," ii, 73.

12 inches in thickness, but it does not appear that either design was carried out, and there is some uncertainty in connection with the bridge at Moulins. A bridge here had been swept away in 1685. Bullet, who was sent down to investigate, found that there was running sand for a depth of 11 feet, and very properly suggested that cofferdams should be provided and the foundations taken right down to the solid bottom. The Academy thought this too costly, and foolishly suggested that excavations should be made for 5 or 6 feet, piles driven in and platforms to take the footings formed on the top of them,<sup>1</sup> but also recommended that the river bed should be more carefully examined before anything was done. At a further sitting the Academy evidently felt it had been imprudent, for it abandoned this idea in favour of Bullet's original proposal. Bullet seems to have prepared a report and specification for this bridge, but trouble ensued. The Governor of Moulins, and Matthieu the Engineer, wrote to the Academy that things were not right, and that Bullet's proposals would not do. The Academy promptly disclaimed all responsibility, passed a resolution that the results of their deliberations had never been communicated to the people on the spot, and severely snubbed Bullet by resolving that he be informed that he was not to give specifications or reports in the name of the Company, without consulting the Company first. Whether it was Bullet's specification to which the bridge was built is uncertain. Whoever was responsible was very much at fault, for the bridge at Moulins, which was rebuilt in eight arches in 1685, totally collapsed on 21 October 1689.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of the official rebuke of the Academy, Bullet returned to the charge in 1686, and called the attention of the Academy to the "Custom of Paris" in relation to different methods of measuring work in building. He also submitted a design for a shop on a narrow frontage, and raised the question of the thickness of retaining walls without buttresses. The Company highly commended "*ses bonnes intentions et la recherche qu'il fait pour trouver des moyens surs pour*

<sup>1</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," ii, 95. Félibien's account is not always intelligible. The Academy was constantly consulted as to the scientific construction of bridges. In 1684 they had gone closely into various methods of bridge-building, and in 1685, besides the bridges at La Ferté and Moulins (Allier), they advised on the Pont Royal, and on bridges at Pont Sur Yonne, and La Charité (Cosne), and in 1686 on the bridges at Tonnerre Saint Pourçain (Gannat-Allier), Pont Saint Esprit, Hennebout (Morbihan), and Pont de l'Arche (Eure).

<sup>2</sup> The bridge was rebuilt for the third time in three arches from designs by J. H. Mansart in 1704, and again collapsed in 1710. See "Procès-Verbaux," ii, 95 note.



se conduire dans la bonne manière des bastir," but went on to make the remarkable admission that up to the present date nobody had discovered any "demonstrations positives dans cet art autres que celles que nous avons des anciens architectes." The Academy, which had turned its back on Claude Perrault, a pioneer in scientific construction, was beginning to realize that something more was necessary than a merely empirical practice. It had owed its foundation to a great extent to the urgent want felt by Colbert of some body to which he could appeal for more or less scientific advice in the vast building operations then being undertaken. François Blondel had possessed the necessary technical knowledge, but he was a theorist and a pedant. Claude Perrault was the only Frenchman so far who had combined remarkable powers of design with a scientific grasp of building processes, and he was out of favour and forgotten. Domestic and ecclesiastical architecture did not involve very intricate problems of construction, but when it came to large engineering works, as they would now be called, it is evident that not only architects and builders, but the Academy itself, were a good deal at sea. It wisely took the precaution to advise an increase of strength in nearly every case in which it was consulted, as in the case of the aqueduct of Maintenon and elsewhere, but the Academy was evidently uneasy; architects attempted feats of construction which they were unable to carry through. The bridge at Moulins collapsed after a precarious life of four years; rebuilt by J. H. Mansart it collapsed again, and in 1686 the Sr. Matthieu, architect and engineer, reported that the bridge at S. Pourçain had fallen three times in forty years.<sup>1</sup>

In 1686 D'Orbay referred to the Academy<sup>2</sup> some notes he had made on Bullet's designs for some very considerable additions to the Archbishop's palace at Bourges. Bullet explained his reasons to the satisfaction of the Academy, and the building was carried out. Blondel (J. F.) admired this building so much, that he particularly recommended it to his students as a fine example of an "avant corps," and even compared it with the works of François Mansart. His criticisms on the design are a good example of Blondel's method with his students. In the first place he pointed out the ground storey was too high for the order of the storey over, making the order look "chétif." Then the pilasters should only have been coupled at the ends, the plinths on which they stand are too low, and the window

<sup>1</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," ii, 118.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 122.

openings are too narrow for the openings below, the rule being that the openings above should never have less than five-sixths of the width of those below. Owing to the great width of the pediment, the figures were "trop légères; tant il est vrai que le défaut de rapport dans une seule partie de l'édifice nuit essentiellement à l'ouvrage entier." Whether Bullet also designed the fine buildings at Bourges known as the Caserne de Condé<sup>1</sup> begun in 1682, I do not know.

Unless it is the house at Issi, near Paris, I am unable to trace any work done by Bullet between 1686 and the beginning of the eighteenth century, and it would seem from his constant attendance at the Academy that he must for this period have occupied himself chiefly with research into the practice of architecture.

In 1687 De la Hire was appointed to succeed Blondel as Professor of Architecture. De la Hire seems to have been an inferior Blondel. Though he must have possessed some knowledge of architecture he never practised the art, but he was learned in mathematics and astronomy, and as his interest was in purely technical points of construction and design, he found himself in close sympathy with such a hard-headed practical architect as Bullet. These men laid the foundations of that close study of applied science which was to become an important element in the French system of architectural training. De la Hire began his course with a study of Scamozzi, which he translated for the benefit of the Academicians, but he very soon settled down to more congenial subjects, such as stereotomy, the thrust of roofs on walls, the scantling of timbers, and geometrical methods of setting out mouldings, while Bullet contributed memoirs on methods of vaulting and practical construction. The attendance usually dwindled down to the Professor and the Secretary, Bruand, Bullet, and D'Orbay; Mansart seldom attended unless he was in difficulties and found it necessary to consult his colleagues on the construction of his buildings.<sup>2</sup> At this period, that is, from 1689 onwards, French architects were doing very little, painters and sculptors might pursue their arts, but architects could only occupy their enforced leisure with these academic discussions. The fact was that owing to the disastrous policy of Louis XIV, there was so little money available that building

<sup>1</sup> Now used as a seminary.

<sup>2</sup> For example, 1689, "L'on s'est entretenu sur quelques particularités concernant la solidité de la construction de la voute des Invalides que Mr. Mansart a proposée à la Campagne" ("Procès-Verbaux," ii, 189). Bullet and De la Hire must have been extremely useful to the fashionable architect.





order supporting an attic storey for the "avant corps." In spite of certain licences Blondel considered Issi a masterpiece.

In 1702 Bullet designed a house in the newly-formed Place Vendôme for Antoine Crosat, a rich financier, and in 1707 the house next door, for Crosat's son-in-law, the Comte d'Evreux. He also carried out in the Hôtel de St. Pol (vielle rue du Temple) some important alterations for Jacques Poultier, Intendant des Finances (+ 1711). Piganiol de la Force says that Bullet and Gabriel provided here "tous les embellissements que l'opulence procure aux financiers."<sup>1</sup> In the Rue Grand Chantier, the Hôtel Amelot de Chaillou, "grande et belle," was built from his designs, "avec bien de soin."<sup>2</sup> This Hotel was famous for its remarkable staircase. The site was an awkward one, and Piganiol de la Force says that the architect managed it with great skill, and that the staircase was one of the most beautiful in Paris.<sup>3</sup> He also says that all the skilful architects of the time gave designs for the Hôtel Jabac in the Rue Neuve S. Merry, but that Bullet succeeded better than any,<sup>4</sup> and that the entrance of the house of M. Terrat in the Rue du Tournon was "un morceau d'architecture estimé."

In the latter years of his life he was employed to design new buildings for the Religieux of S. Martin des Champs. It appears that the community had decided to invest their money in a building speculation in the Rue S. Martin, and Bullet, who many years before had drawn up the plans and alignments for the City of Paris, was employed to deal with the business, and design the buildings which were begun in 1712. A good deal of building was being done by the religious orders in the early part of the eighteenth century, and there are other instances, not only of church building, but of building speculation by religious communities. The only other building by Bullet that I have come across is the Hôtel de Vauvray, Rue de Seine, ingeniously planned on a long narrow site with a garden at the side.

Bullet died in 1716. Blondel, who knew his work well, regarded him as a master in his art. To me he seems rather to have been typical of those solid, hard-headed men of affairs to be found in the ranks of

<sup>1</sup> "Desc. Hist. de Paris," iv, 396.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 96.

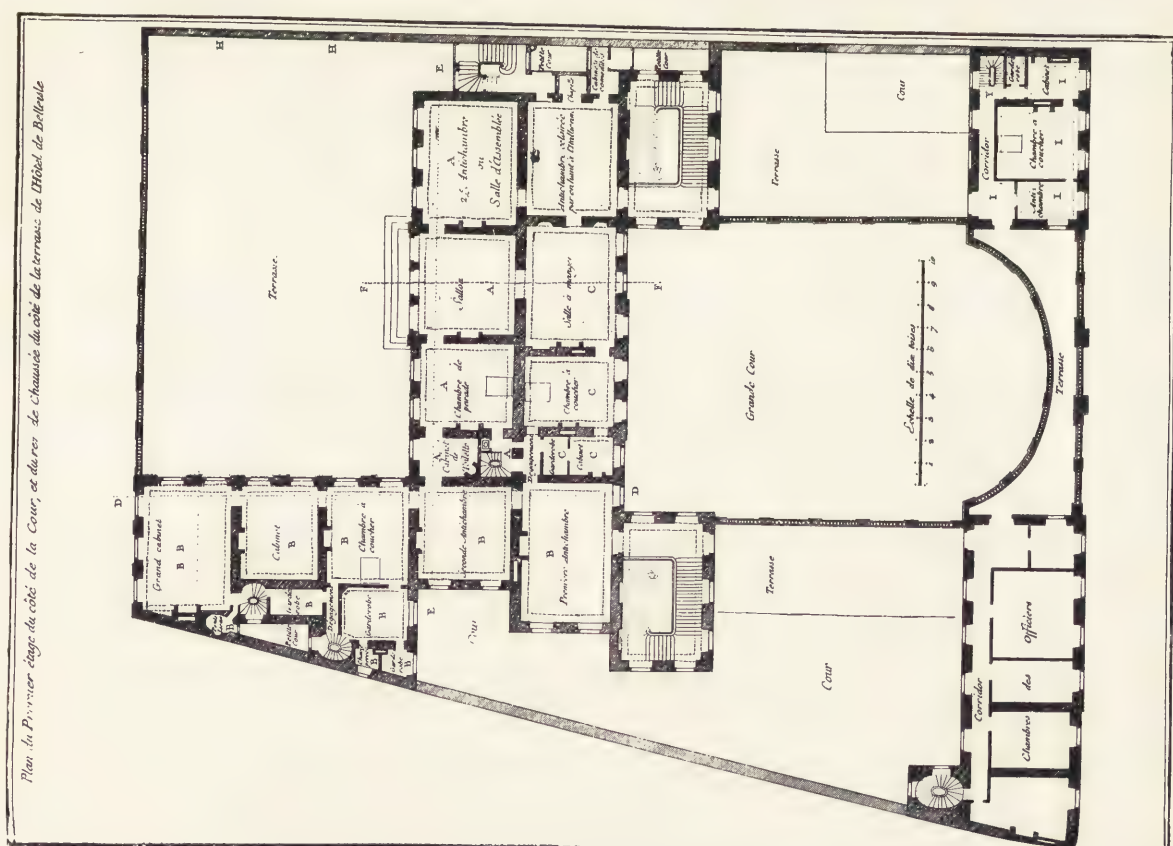
<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, iv, 365. The account is obscure. He describes the Hôtel du Duc de Tallard as being in the Rue des Enfants Rouges, but elsewhere writing of the Hôtel du Duc de Tallard he says, "Cette maison qui est grande et belle fut batie sur les desseins de Bullet pour M. Amelot de Chaillou," and places it in the Rue du Grand Chantier.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 64, and vii, 191. The house was a good deal altered in execution. See the Petit Marot for elevation and plan of House of "Jabba," showing the building before Bullet designed its alterations.



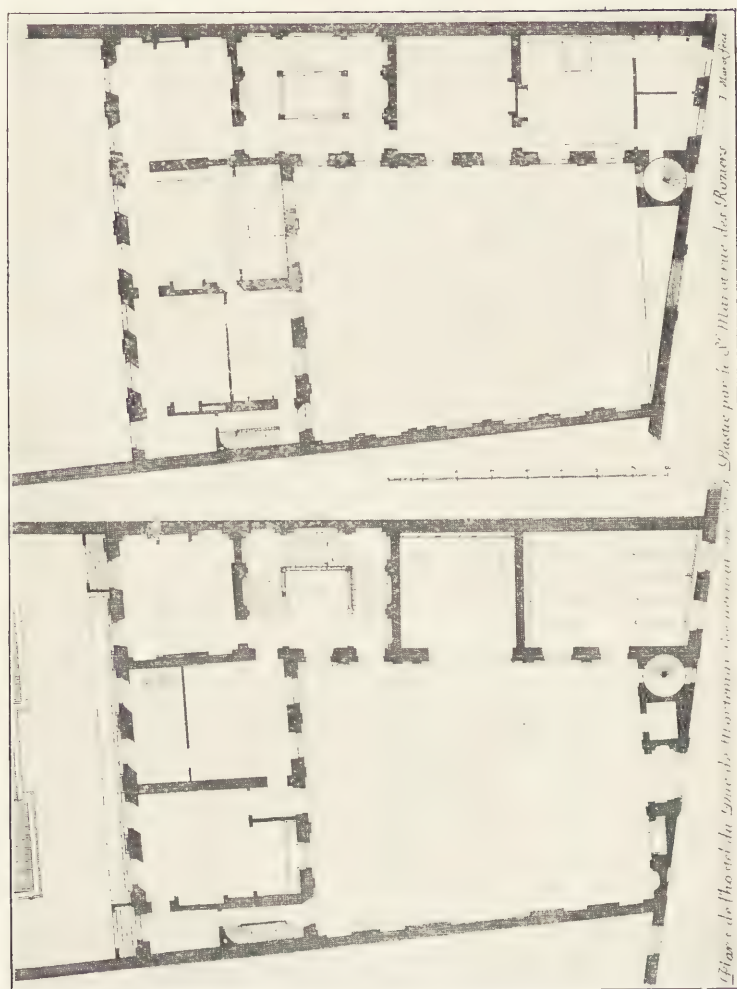
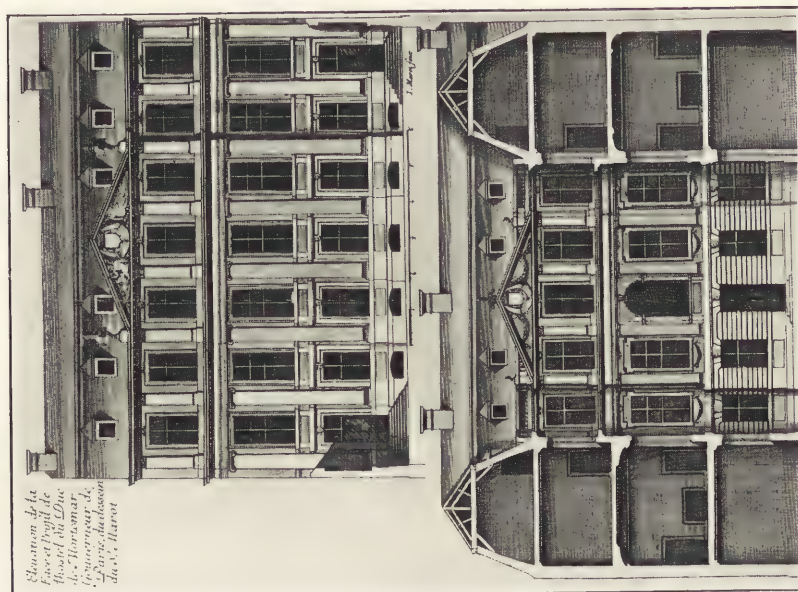
the profession in France, men who knew their business thoroughly as practical men, and who, as Bullet undoubtedly was, were perfectly familiar with the technique of their art. Bullet would no more have gone wrong with the proportions of his orders according to accepted authority, than he would have spoken French like a Breton peasant. His architecture is always sound, reasonable, and orderly, and this is what commended it so much to a precisian such as the younger Blondel. But it is just a little disappointing. One knows beforehand what to expect and one always gets it, but it is just this absence of the unforeseen and unexpected that deprives it of interest, and that leads me to think that Antoine le Pautre, in spite of his lapses of taste, was the better artist of the two. In the work of Bullet one looks in vain for that play of fancy, grim, capricious, or humorous, which attracts us to certain buildings with a fascination almost human, nor does one find in it those subtle harmonies of rhythm and proportion which seem to be the privilege only of the elect. It is masculine in its straightforward simplicity, but fails of first-rate attainment because it is unsympathetic. It is a pity that an art based on such an excellent foundation does not go further, for there is no conflict between science and art; it is only at a lower level that things go wrong, and that we are shocked by the spurious originality of the bad artist, and the crude materialism of the engineer. De la Hire<sup>1</sup> and Bullet, though in a less degree, made the mistake that is made to-day by a certain school who would limit architecture to scientific construction. The fallacy is in the narrow use of the term "scientific." They would confine science to natural science, and its practice to obedience to those laws that have been formulated as the result of observation and experiment. But that is only the threshold of what Voltaire called the "Temple of Taste," and the work of the architect yet remains to do after he has crossed it. A really scientific view would take account, not only of the laws of natural forces and the properties of materials, but also of those qualities of man, his intellect, imagination, passions and sensibilities, to which the appeal of architecture is made. It is the fallacy of the practical person, and of the advocate of mere science in architecture, that they are for ever mistaking the means for the end.

<sup>1</sup> De la Hire, who was Professor of Mathematics at the Collège Royal and in the Academy of Science, was appointed to succeed F. Blondel as Professor of Architecture in the Academy of Architecture in 1687. He devoted himself to problems of scientific construction, and his constant effort was to translate architecture into terms of definite and ascertainable knowledge, so that its practice would become a matter of rule.



ELEVATION AND FIRST FLOOR PLAN OF THE HÔTEL DE BELLEISLE. JACQUES BRUAND (see p. 147)  
(FROM BLONDEL, "ARCHITECTURE FRANÇAISE," I, XXIX)





GROUND FLOOR

FIRST FLOOR

ELEVATIONS AND PLANS OF THE HOUSE FOR THE DUC DE MORTEMAR. J. MAROT (see p. 150)

Both Bruand and Bullet were succeeded in their practice by relations, Bruand by a son and a nephew, Bullet by a son. In 1699 the first act of Monsieur Le Surintendant<sup>1</sup> was to summon the Academy and announce to them its new constitution. Henceforward it was to consist of seven architects, a professor and a secretary in the first class and seven architects in the second class, all ranking as "architectes du Roi," and having a vote at the Conferences of the Academy. Three months later it was announced that the second class was to consist of ten members, and among them were L'Assurance, Desgodetz, "M. Bulet *le fils*," Bruant (the younger), and Gittard. Jacques Bruand (*fils*) became Professor of Architecture at the Academy, and was promoted to the first class in 1706, and Blondel says that he was regarded by his contemporaries as "un des architectes depuis Mansard (François) qui ait le mieux profilé." Blondel illustrates the Hôtel de Belle Isle, a large and important house, built in 1721 from his designs for a grandson of Fouquet in the rue de Bourbon.<sup>2</sup> The plan, with its great double staircases and inconvenient arrangement of offices,<sup>3</sup> was rather old-fashioned, but the elevations were in the approved manner of the time, dispensing with any orders. The design gives one the impression that Jacques Bruand was a better architect than his father. He died in 1732. François Bruand, nephew of Liberal, was probably trained by his uncle, and was a pensionary of the French Academy in Rome. In June 1683 Liberal Bruand exhibited to the Academy of Architecture in Paris some drawings of churches in Rome made by his nephew. The Academy approved of them "parceque principalement qu'ils sont délicatement<sup>4</sup> et exactement desseignez," but in the month following young Bruand got into trouble with the authorities in Rome,<sup>5</sup> and in July, Errard, the Director, was ordered by Colbert to expel him from the school. Notwithstanding, he appears to have become an Academician of the second class in 1706, but resigned in 1730.<sup>6</sup> Of

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Mansart, appointed January 1699.

<sup>2</sup> Destroyed by the Commune.

<sup>3</sup> All dishes had to be brought up the main stairs to the Salle-à-Manger on the first floor.

<sup>4</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," ii, 32.

<sup>5</sup> "Correspondance," i, 127.

<sup>6</sup> "Archives de l'Art Française," i, 420. M. Lemonnier, however, doubts whether the Bruand who was expelled was the Bruand who became an Academician. Liberal Bruand had more than one son, and in the "Procès-Verbaux" of the Academy, 3 January 1688, it is recorded that the Academy after making a ceremonial call on Louvois, "est revenu pour faire lecture du journal de voyage que M. Bruand le fils a fait au Levant."



J. B. Bullet, Sieur de Chamblain, son of Pierre Bullet, nothing seems to be known except that he was one of the ten architects of the second class nominated in 1699. The Academy tended to become a family affair, very greatly to its prejudice. The families of Mansart, Bullet, Bruand, D'Orbay, Félibien, Gobert, De la Hire, de Cotte, L'Assurance, Beausire, are examples of two generations, and Mollet and Gabriel of three generations of Academicians. An Academy that constantly encouraged itself in monopoly was simply courting disaster, and it came in 1793.

## CHAPTER XI

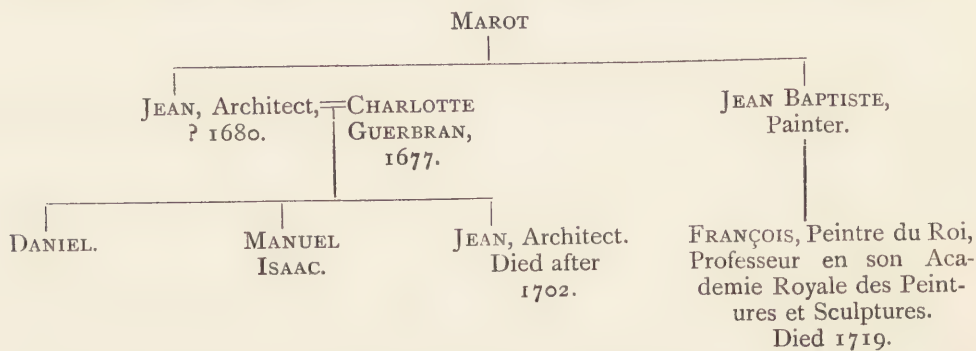
THE DRAUGHTSMEN: JEAN MAROT, DANIEL MAROT, JEAN LE PAUTRE, PIERRE LE PAUTRE, LE BLOND, BERAÏN, LE CLERC, ISRAËL SILVESTRE, AND ADAM PERELLE

THE instinct for form has never failed French architecture through all its changes and vicissitudes. The perfection of French Gothic, the exquisite technique of its sculpture, attest a sensitiveness to beauty of form, whether abstract in its architecture or natural in its sculpture, which was unparalleled since the days of Pheidias. The French might fail in colour, but in sense of form never. Under Flemish and Burgundian influence, sculpture faltered at the end of the fifteenth century and lost touch of humanity. But Goujon brought it back to the right way, and the sense of form was as strong in Goujon, in François Mansart, in Coysevox, Clodion, and the younger Gabriel, as it had been in the thirteenth century. With this traditional instinct for form, it was only to be expected that draughtsmanship should hold a place of honour among French artists, and that in the great expansion of the arts in the reign of Louis XIV, draughtsmen of architecture and ornament should have played an important part. Jean Marot, the earliest among them, was the direct successor of Du Cerceau, in that he devoted himself to giving accurate drawings, whether geometrical or in perspective, of actually executed buildings, and, like Du Cerceau, he also indulged himself in a quantity of ornamental designs, but there is this difference, that Marot really was an architect, and did actual architectural work. He is said to have been born in Paris about 1619. The date is uncertain. In the entry of his death in the Register of the church of the Saints Pères, Prot. December 1679, he is described as "Jean Marot, architecte à Paris," and his sons Daniel and Manuel Isaac stated that "le deffunt lors de son

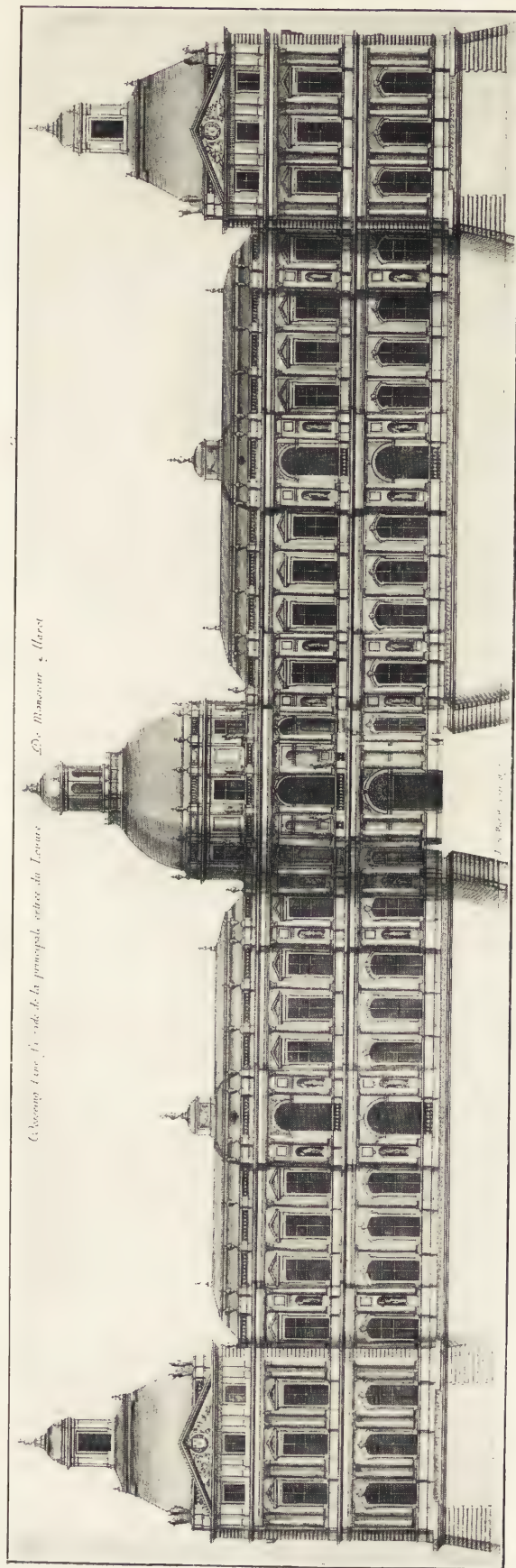


deceds, estoit âgé de 60 ans ou environ."<sup>1</sup> He is said to have been the son of a joiner. Though little is known of his architecture, and no building designed by him is now in existence, Marot must have gained a considerable reputation, as he was one of the architects who prepared a design for the completion of the Louvre, and this design, though old-fashioned, was by no means wanting in accomplishment, and adhered more faithfully to the scale of the existing building than any of the designs that have reached us. Marot proposed for the entrance façade facing S. Germain L'Auxerrois, a principal pavilion in three storeys, with a circular dome and lantern, connected by two storey wings with the end pavilions, which were to be in three storeys with a lofty square roof surmounted by a square lantern. The design was a good deal broken up, and Marot followed the bad French habit of hipping back the roofs of the buildings between the pavilions. A better idea of his skill as an architect is given by the plans and elevations of the house which he designed for the Duc de Mortemar, Governor of Paris, in the Rue des Roziers. The garden front is simple and attractive, except for the solecisms of the pediment. The design of the Hôtel du Pussort, though it contains some attractive details, was too much cut up, and Marot made a curious use of shells over the window heads of the ground floor windows.<sup>2</sup> In 1669

<sup>1</sup> Herluison, "Actes d'Etat-Civil." Manuel Isaac stated that he did not know how to sign. Destailleur gives the date of Marot's birth as 1625 ("Notices sur quelques artistes Français," p. 131), but his pedigree in the note shows that Jean was born before 1614. Destailleur says there were two engravers of the name of Marot, and that the 700 to 800 plates attributed to Jean are really the work of Jean the architect, his son Daniel and Jean Baptiste a master painter, and half brother of Jean (1602-1677). Herluison gives entries relating both to Jean Marot, architect, and to his brother Jean Baptiste and to a younger Jean, Architect (after 1702). The pedigree from their entries would be

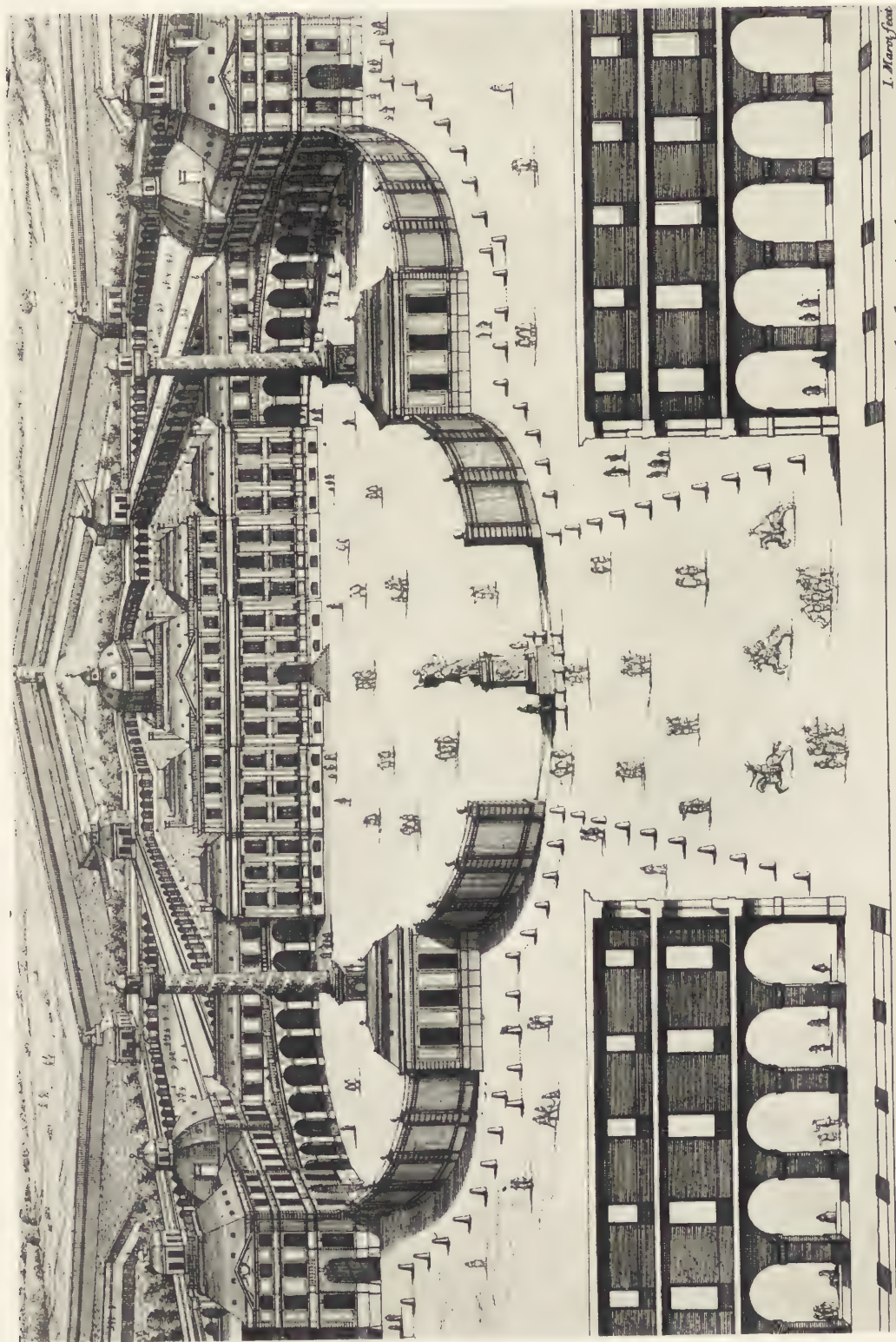


<sup>2</sup> Marot also designed a large town house for M. de Monceaux of which he gives plans and elevations, but it is doubtful whether the house was ever built.



JEAN MAROT'S DESIGN FOR THE LOUVRE. EAST ELEVATION AND PRINCIPAL ENTRANCE (p. 150)





*Vue du Palais de Monsieur l'Electeur Palatin pour batir a Mannheim du dessein du Sr. Marot*  
J. Marot fecit

DESIGN FOR A PALACE AT MANNHEIM. J. MAROT (p. 151)

he designed the Mausoleum in S. Denis set up at the funeral of Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles I. It is not clear whether this was a catafalque set up for the occasion only, or a permanent monument. There is now no trace of it, and the probability is that it was a temporary affair like the design for the Echevins of Paris made in 1649. Marot's most ambitious effort was a vast design of a palace made for the Elector Palatine at Mannheim, a city founded in 1606, destroyed after the Thirty Years' War, and again in 1689. I can find nothing more about this design, which was never carried out. He also engraved his designs for a bathing place to be formed at the end of the garden at Maisons next the river, but these were not carried out. Indeed this seems to have been the fate of most of his inventions. The church of the Feuillantines in the Rue du Faubourg S. Jacques is attributed to Marot, both by Blondel and Piganiol de la Force, who unkindly says that it is a pity that on such a conspicuous site the design of "ce mauvais architecte" should show nothing but faults.<sup>1</sup> Blondel, however, and other much better judges, thought highly of the design, "d'une assez belle ordonnance," though badly carried out.<sup>2</sup>

Jean Marot's reputation really rests on his extraordinary skill as an architectural draughtsman and engraver. His engraved plans and elevations of buildings, especially those in the "petit Marot," are among the best things of their kind in existence, perfectly accurate, and complete in every detail. Nobody, in fact, but an architect could have made his engravings, such, for instance, as his admirable series of elevations of the Louvre and Tuileries. In his perspectives he was less happy. Though here and there he produced a masterpiece, such as the front of the house of the Grand Prior, as a picturesque draughtsman he was inferior in skill to his son Daniel, to the Perelles, Le Clerc, or Pierre Le Pautre, and his fancy drawings of the "Temple de Balbec scitué en Grece," his ridiculous versions of Greek temples are as unfortunate in their architecture as they are in their method of presentation. His series of ten triumphal arches is more satisfactory, though the designs are florid and badly composed. The ones which I illustrate are perhaps the best of the series. But Jean Marot will

<sup>1</sup> "Desc. Hist. de Paris," vi, 163.

<sup>2</sup> Blondel, however, appears to have confused father and son. He assigns it to the elder Marot, but as the latter died in 1679, and Blondel says the front was built in 1713, it must have been designed by his son, Jean Marot II, who made the rather feeble engraving of the church.



always stand high in the estimation of students of French architecture. His faithful engravings are still some of the most valuable materials for its history, and if he was less brilliant than his successors, his honesty of purpose gives him a place to himself. The earliest engraving of his that I have come across is one of a huge trophy consisting of an obelisk on an octagonal arcade set up by the Provost and Echevins of Paris in front of the Hôtel de Ville to celebrate the birth of Louis XIV. This is dated 1649.<sup>1</sup> His first important publication was the quarto volume of exquisite geometrical engravings known as "le petit Marot." This volume contains 108 plates, including the principal works of F. Mansart, Lemercier, and Le Muet. There is no date, but I take it to have been issued between 1655 and 1660.<sup>2</sup> His next publication, "Le Magnifique Chateau de Richelieu," seems to have been issued in 1660. This was followed by "l'architecture Française," generally known as "le grand Marot," a series of some 195 folio plates in perspective and bird's-eye of the principal houses of the time in the neighbourhood of Paris. The preparation of these engravings must have occupied most of Marot's time, but in 1668 he appears under somewhat remarkable circumstances, as designing and contracting for four grottoes for Me. de la Valliere and Me. de Montespan, to be constructed in their rooms at S. Germain-en-Laye.<sup>3</sup> The association of the two royal mistresses, the one already losing her place, and the other just entering on her succession, is one of the most astonishing episodes of the court of Louis XIV. The contract was made by Marot with the two ladies conjointly. Marot was to complete the grottoes in three months, starting the week following the date of contract, for the sum of 4,000 livres, one-third to be paid at once, one-third when the work was half done, and one-third on completion. The

<sup>1</sup> Destailleur, however, mentions a plate of 1640 by Marot, his illustrations to Le Muet's treatise on the five orders, 1645, and a collection of sixteen drawings of houses in Paris, d. 1644. See his Bibliography. Marot seldom dated his work. Neither the "Grand" or "Petit Marot" are dated, and that rogue of all publishers, Jombert, made confusion worse, by his bogus collections of reprints in the eighteenth century.

<sup>2</sup> "Recueil des Plans, Profils et elevations des plusieurs Palais, Chateaux, Églises, Sepultures, Grottes et Hostels bâtis dans Paris et aux environs avec beaucoup de magnificence par les meilleurs architectes du Royaume, desseignez, mesurés et gravés par Jean Marot, Architecte Parisien." What Blondel means by saying that this work appeared in Paris in "1764" I do not know. My copy is certainly of the date given in the text. The Hôtel Jabba or Jabach is the latest building shown.

<sup>3</sup> See "Nouvelles Archives de l'art Franc.," 1877, v, 167-171, with note by M. Guiffrey.

grottoes were to be formed in masonry "peinte en rocaille ainsi qu'il est accoustumé." As was to be expected from these ladies, and from the fact that the King paid the money, the cost far exceeded the contract, for in April, 1669, Marot was paid 6,000 francs for the iron-work to the balconies of their rooms at S. Germain-en-Laye. In August he received the balance on a sum of 9,200 francs, for the "ornemens de peinture en rocaille, bassins et jets d'eau qu'il a faits dans huit balcons des appartements de Me. la Duchesse de la Valliere et de Me. la Marquise de Montespan"; in January 1670, a further sum of 3,000 livres, and in April a final payment of 1,900 francs.<sup>1</sup> From the words "ainsi qu'il est accoustumé," it appears that Marot was an expert in grottoes. He himself engraved one of his larger designs, in which the grotto appears to be the sunk garden with the fountain in the centre. In the "petit Marot" a plan, elevation, and section of the famous grotto of Meudon is given, and the inscription on the elevation is "La Grote du Chateau de Meudon Desseignée<sup>2</sup> et gravée par Jean Marot, architecte." This volume also contains the plans, elevations, and sections of a large grotto in two storeys at Noisi le Grand, and the bathing place at Maisons designed by Marot appears to have been as much a grotto as a bath. They usually seem to have been based on the "cryptoporticus." The Grotto of Apollo at Versailles is another famous example.<sup>3</sup> But the taste for these elaborate rock grottoes, cut into banks, damp, ill-lit and uncomfortable, went out of fashion, and the latest thing was to build them upstairs, as in the grottoes at S. Germain-en-Laye. At the Hôtel Beauvais a grotto was placed on the first floor, next the bathroom, but at their best they were an extravagant folly, and they disappeared at the end of the seventeenth century.

In 1676<sup>4</sup> Marot received 330 francs for plates of the façade of the Louvre; in 1677 900 francs for the Louvre, and in 1678 the balance of a total sum of 1,250 francs, "pour les planches qu'il a gravées de la façade du Louvre." These are the elevations of the various

<sup>1</sup> "Comptes," i, 434.

<sup>2</sup> Perelle, who made a fine bird's-eye view of this grotto, says it was designed by Primaticcio and decorated by "Messrs. Nicolo" (del Abbate), but that the attic storey to the end pavilions had been added recently (after 1660). My impression is that the two upper storeys and roof of the centre pavilion were added at the same time, and it is possible that these additions and the orangery and parterre in front were made by Marot.

<sup>3</sup> In the first vol. of the "Comptes" (1664-1680) there are many entries for "ouvrages de Rocaillie."

<sup>4</sup> "Comptes," i, 928, 994, 1088.



designs for the completion of the Louvre, and so far from showing any falling off, are among the finest of his engravings. The exact date of his death is unknown, but it was somewhere about 1680. Mariette says that he engraved architecture "avec soin et propriété, mais sans beaucoup de goût," but he modifies this by concluding that in addition to the clearness of his work and the skilful gradation of his line, one finds in it "une fidélité et une correction dans les contours, qu'il luy auroit été difficile de donner, s'il n'eut été luy même excellent architecte."<sup>1</sup>

His work was carried on by his son, Daniel, one of the most skilful of all the brilliant designer-engravers of the time of Louis XIV. Daniel Marot was a finer draughtsman than his father, and it has been suggested that he helped the latter with his figures.<sup>2</sup> He is supposed to have been born about the middle of the seventeenth century, and received his training from his father in architectural drawing and perspective, but at an early age he must have come under the influence of that extraordinary artist, Jean le Pautre, and having great natural ability and imagination, he went far beyond his father both in technique and in the range of his work. Indeed, some of his designs for ceilings and other details, made before he fled to Holland, are scarcely distinguishable from the work of Le Pautre himself. Except for the work which he did with his father, and some admirable engravings for the Cabinet du Roi,<sup>3</sup> he does not appear to have done very much work in France. In 1679 he received payment for two plates not specified, and this is the only mention of him in the "Comptes." The Edict of Nantes was revoked in 1685, and Daniel Marot, who was of the reformed religion, was one of the innumerable artists and craftsmen lost to France through that disastrous act. He fled to Holland, entered the service of William of Orange, and in 1688 he accompanied that Prince to England, and was appointed "Architecte du Roi." He so describes himself on that wonderful drawing of the Royal State Coach made at the Hague in 1698. Of his work in England nothing is known, except that it is certain that he and not Le Nôtre designed the garden at Hampton Court,<sup>4</sup> but he found employment in Holland in

<sup>1</sup> Abecedario, *s.v.* Marot, "Archives de l'art Franc.," vi, 267.

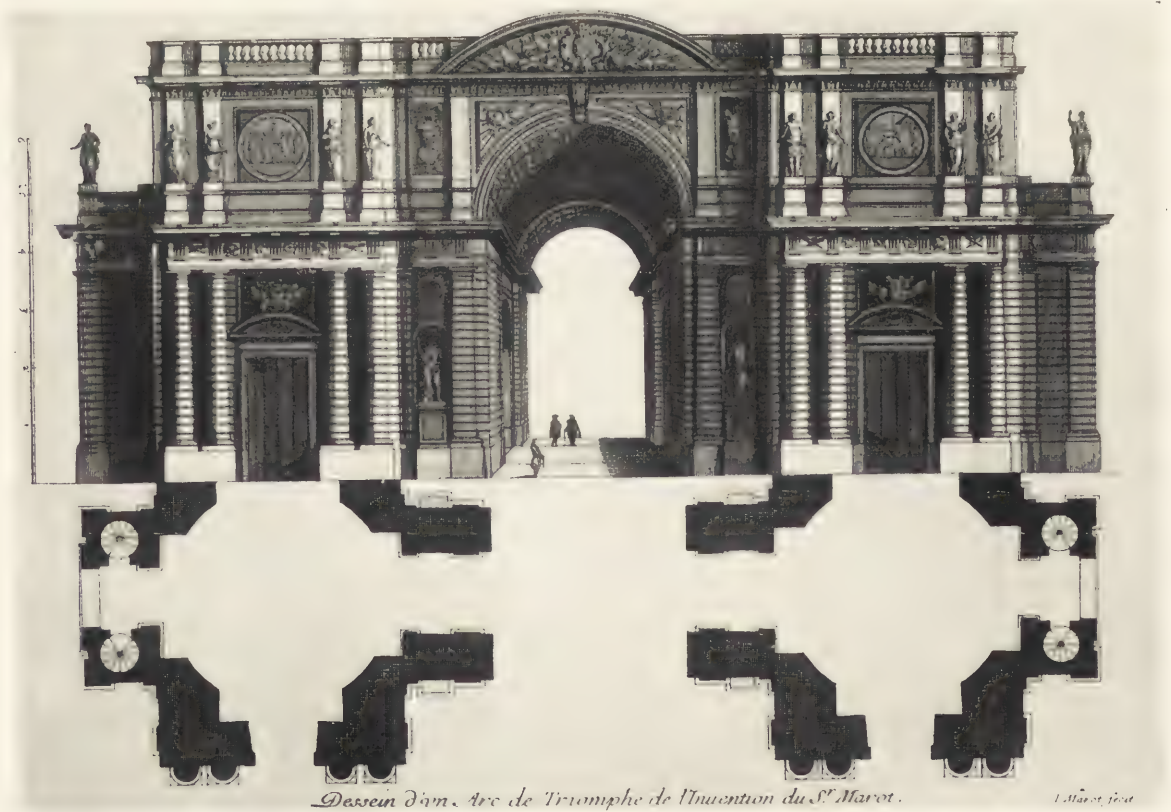
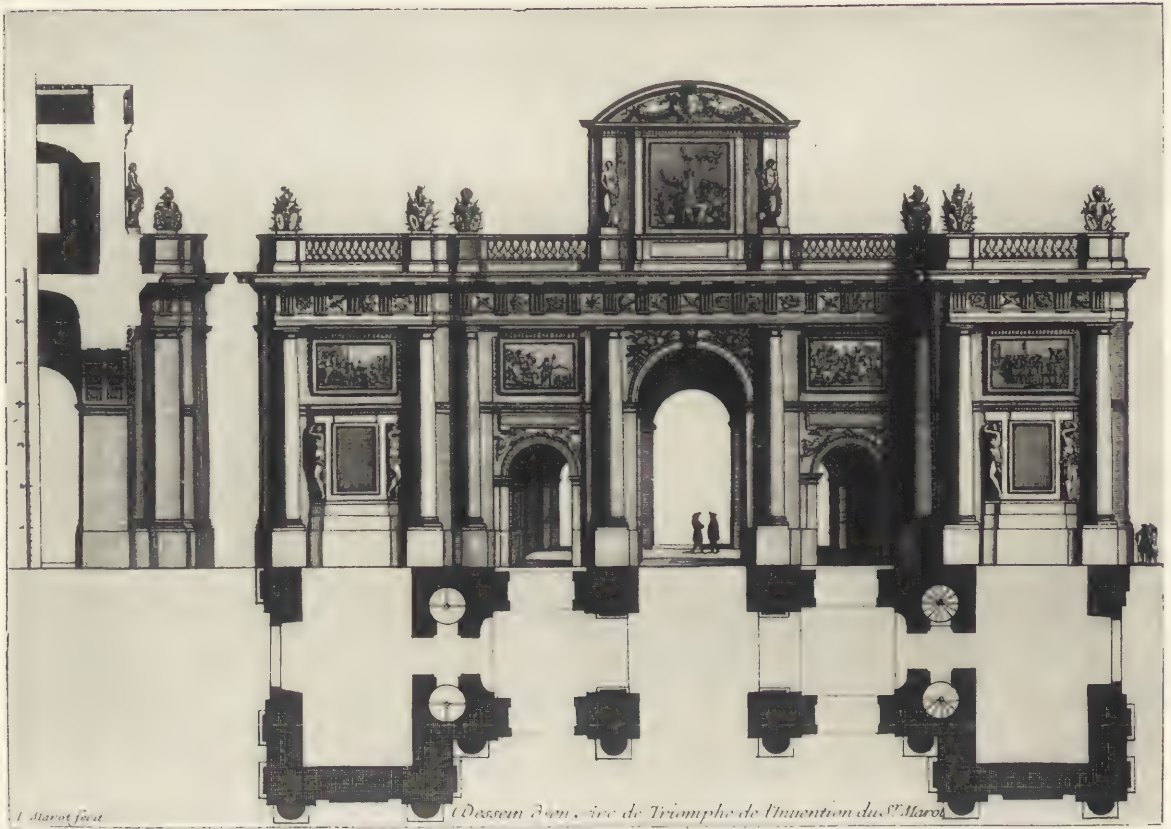
<sup>2</sup> More particularly in certain plates of triumphal arches.

<sup>3</sup> See his plates of Besançon (taken by Louis XIV in 1674), and Dôle and Ypres (taken 1678) in the Cabinet du Roi.

<sup>4</sup> Destailleur refers to a drawing entitled "Parterre d'Amton Court inventé par D. Marot."







DESIGNS FOR TRIUMPHAL ARCHES. JEAN MAROT (see p. 151)

designing gardens for Dutch noblemen, and he here produced designs of all sorts in immense quantities, perspectives for staircases and the walls of courtyards, then much in fashion in France, ceilings in the heavy manner of Le Brun and in the lighter fashion of Delamare, Mausoleums or "mozoles," as he calls them, monuments, triumphal arches, sculpture, chimney pieces, chairs, tables, settees, embroidery, tapestries, state bedsteads, clocks, snuff-boxes, gardens, parterres, trellis work, every conceivable detail, in short, of the rich man's house of the time. A collection of 222 plates, entitled "*Œuvres du Sr. D. Marot, Architecte de Guillaume III. Roi de la Grand Bretagne,*" was published at the Hague in 1703. The engravings are unequal, some are coarse and almost clumsy, others, such, for example, as his designs for arabesques and certain of his ceilings, are of exquisite delicacy. Destailleur considered that as a designer he was superior to Le Pautre, "on doit le regarder comme un des artistes les plus complets que le France ait produits . . . plus on étudie l'œuvre de Daniel Marot plus on regrette que ce talent ait été, en grand partie, perdu pour la France." Marot is supposed to have died about 1718. He was a fine artist in a school that excelled in majestic if somewhat exuberant design, and the praise that Mariette bestowed on Jean Marot applies to his son, and, indeed, to all these designer-engravers. They were thoroughly trained men, and knew quite well what they were about. One notes in modern etchings and engravings, otherwise excellent, mistakes in drawing due to the fact that the draughtsman did not understand what he was drawing. That is a fault never found in the work of the Frenchmen. Everything there works out rightly, because the object was not only seen but understood. Le Clerc's wonderful plate of the building of the Louvre is an instance.

But the greatest of these draughtsmen-designers, the greatest, perhaps, within his own limits, that has ever lived, was Jean Le Pautre, the improvisatore from whose facile pencil designs seemed almost to flow of themselves. So prolific was his fancy and so accomplished his draughtsmanship, that many of his designs were drawn straight away on the copper, without preliminary studies, and though the study of his work shows that the area of his ideas was limited, he rang the changes on those ideas with astonishing dexterity. Jean Le Pautre was born in Paris in 1617, and was apprenticed to a highly intelligent cabinet-maker and engraver, Adam Philippon, who was a member of the Mission sent to Rome by De Noyers de Dangu, Surintendant des Maisons Royales (1633-43), to collect skilled workmen in Italy for the



decoration of the Louvre.<sup>1</sup> Philippon appears to have taken his young journeyman with him, and employed him to make drawings of the antiques, which were afterwards engraved by Le Pautre and published by Philippon in 1645. It would thus seem that Jean Marot and Jean Le Pautre appeared on the scene at the same time almost to a year. Le Pautre began by reproducing the works of the old masters. In 1652 "dans la plus grande chaleur de la Fronde,"<sup>2</sup> he ventured on a plate that, under Richelieu, would have cost him his head. In this engraving Mdle. de Montpensier was shown, with two other ladies, sweeping Mazarin out of France. On the plate was a ribald inscription. Mazarin, who had an admirable sense of humour, sent for Le Pautre, and when the latter fell on his knees and begged for mercy, Mazarin merely remarked in his half-foreign accent, "C'est la Pot qui a fait cela; je lui pardonne," and contented himself with making Mademoiselle ridiculous. After this episode, Le Pautre retired into the safer practice of engravings of state ceremonials, and it was not till 1654<sup>3</sup> that he began that amazing series of suites of ornament of every kind to which he owes his great reputation, "Lambris à l'Italienne," "cheminées à la Romaine" (1663), "à l'Italienne" (1665), "à la moderne," "à peu de frais," ceilings, vases, panels, friezes, tombs, fountains, cartouches, followed in quick succession, and though these could hardly have been carried out as drawn, they form a vivid counterpart of the work being done in the Royal Palaces by Le Vau and Le Brun. On the title-page of his series of chimney pieces, he describes himself as "Architecte et Dessinateur des bâtimens du Roi," but I cannot find that he ever designed a building that was carried out, and his designs for houses and parterres are far too florid for execution.

In 1670 he was employed on the "Cabinet du Roi," that famous collection of twenty-three folio volumes of engravings, representing the most notable events in the reign of Louis XIV. He was elected a member of the Academy of painting and sculpture in 1677.<sup>4</sup> He died in 1684.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fréart de Chambray, author of the "Parallèle d'Architecture," etc., was at the head of this Mission.

<sup>2</sup> Mariette, *Abecedario*.

<sup>3</sup> Destailleur says 1657, but I have come across one dated 1654.

<sup>4</sup> List of members of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture, 1648-1793 ("Archives de l'art Franc.," i, 369).

<sup>5</sup> Herluison, "Actes d'État Civil." Herluison gives an entry (St. Benoît) of the burial of "Jacques Le Pautre, graveur" in 1684. His widow, Marguerite Gastelier, died in 1698, aged seventy-two.







PART OF CEILING. BY DANIEL MAROT (see p. 155)





FRIEZES. BY JEAN LE PAUTRE (see p. 156)



VASES. BY JEAN LE PAUTRE (see p. 156)





I have dealt elsewhere with the extraordinary quality of his work,<sup>1</sup> his power of improvisation, the wonderful sweep of his line. Mariette refers to the fire and vivacity of his temperament, which led him to pass quickly on from one work to another, and which also involved him in a serious quarrel with his brother Antoine, the architect, but it is just this ardent vivacity that gives his best work its peculiar quality, an energy of movement that makes the work of Berain trifling, and of Oppenord and Meissonier absolutely insipid. Bernini, himself the most fiery and impatient of artists, considered that the engravings of Le Pautre were the finest things that he had seen in France, and till the latter part of the eighteenth century they enjoyed a European reputation. But they were repudiated by the Classical purists, and were, of course, despised and forgotten in the Gothic revival, and in the modern craze for a dismal version of neo-Greek architecture, they remain in the cold, waiting their restoration to their proper place in the succession of art. The dislike of all ornament is quite intelligible, especially to an architect, but for those who hanker for it, who feel that architecture misses its aim unless it is rich in ornament, there can be no finer field of study than the engravings of Jean Le Pautre.

Pierre Le Pautre was the eldest son of Jean, and was married to Marthe Tyrus, "fille de Louis Tyrus bourgs. de Paris," in 1678.<sup>2</sup> He also was a most able engraver; and possessed a more accurate knowledge of architecture than his father. He was engaged on the Cabinet du Roi, and produced in the plate of Namur (taken 1692) a characteristic example of his clear, delicate art. His perspective view of the Hôtel des Invalides in the official folio of 1683 is a masterpiece of architectural drawing, and not less skilful are his engravings from the drawings of Desgodetz of "Les Édifices Antiques de Rome," 1682, and the plates of Versailles issued in 1714-15, a year before his death. His great ability was not likely to escape the attention of J. H. Mansart, and when the latter became *Surintendant des bâtiments*, he got Le Pautre appointed draughtsman and engraver of the Royal buildings, and, according to Mariette, "Il se servoit souvent de sa main pour rédiger et mettre au net ses pensées. Ainsy Pierre Le Pautre eut beaucoup de part a tous les ouvrages qui se firent dans la suite à Versailles, à Marly, et dans les autres Maisons royales, tant pour ce

<sup>1</sup> "Architectural Drawing and Draughtsmen," Cassell and Co., pp. 37-45. Destailleur gives a full bibliography of his work, and says that it included some 2,000 engravings.

<sup>2</sup> Herluison.



qui regarde l'architecture que le jardinage. Il en fit presque tous les desseins."<sup>1</sup> In 1699 Pierre Le Pautre was appointed to the "Bureau des Plans"<sup>2</sup> at a salary of 2,000 francs per annum. With him were six other draughtsmen, including Cailleteau "dit L'Assurance," who was paid 3,000 francs, and Cauchy, "ancien dessinateur," who was paid 1,200 francs. Le Pautre continued in this office till 1715,<sup>3</sup> and there can be little doubt that both Mansart and De Cotte relied largely on their extremely able draughtsmen. Mansart in particular is known from contemporary evidence to have been a past master in the use of "ghosts," and whatever his natural ability may have been his methods of practice must have rendered an "architecte sous clef" an absolute necessity. Pierre Le Pautre died in 1716, the last of the great draughtsmen-designers of the age of Louis XIV.<sup>4</sup>

Jean Berain, engraver and draughtsman, "de la Chambre et du Cabinet du Roy," skilful and accomplished as he was, scarcely comes within the range of architecture. His business was to provide designs for all the ephemeral occasions of the Court. If a princess was to be married, a masque played at Versailles, or some important personage buried, Berain was called in to design the *mise-en-scène* down to its minutest details—and, indeed, his design lay wholly in details, locks, and door furniture, clocks, jewellery, and arabesques or "Berinades," as they were called, "Singeries," and designs for costumes for ballets and the like.<sup>5</sup> There is not apparent in his work any real sense of architecture, and the merit of it lies in his consummate skill as an engraver, and his amusing if somewhat trivial fancy.

Sebastian Le Clerc, one of the finest of French engravers, was born at Metz in 1637, but his connection with architecture is slight. He was elected a member of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture in August, 1672, and in 1682 was appointed professor of geo-

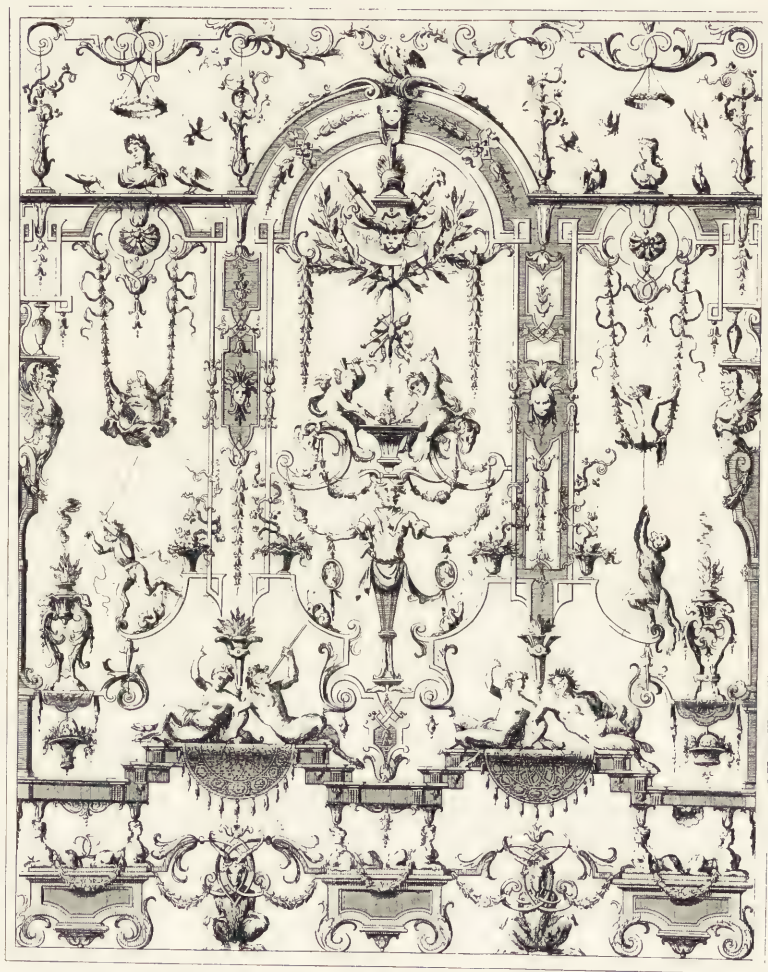
<sup>1</sup> Abecedario, "Archives de l'art Franc.," vi, 188.

<sup>2</sup> "Comptes," iv, 554.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, v, 925. In the index to this volume Le Pautre the draughtsman is called Jacques, and Le Pautre the Sculptor Pierre, but this is wrong, the draughtsman was undoubtedly Pierre.

<sup>4</sup> In many of the plates of Jean Le Pautre, "Le Blond, exct." appears as well as "J. Le Pautre Inv<sup>t</sup>. et fec." This Le Blond, who was a publisher and printseller, was the father or uncle of Jean Baptise Alexandre Le Blond, an architect and draughtsman of considerable ability, to whom I shall refer.

<sup>5</sup> Some of his designs for costumes bear a curious resemblance to the drawings for masques made by Inigo Jones now at Chatsworth. Inigo Jones' drawings were the earliest by twenty-five to thirty years, and are a good deal the better of the two collections. See Destailleur for a list of Berain's works.



A SINGERIE. BY BERAIN (p. 158)





metry.<sup>1</sup> Le Clerc was the son of a jeweller, and showed his ability in drawing at an early age. He was employed as "ingénieur géomètre" by La Fertè, Governor of Lorraine, and prepared plans of certain fortresses, but he was so delicate, "si faible et si fluet," that he had to give up outdoor work, and coming to Paris in 1665 was advised by Le Brun to devote himself entirely to engraving, which he did for the remainder of his long life. He was a worker of prodigious industry. Mariette says he produced more works of different sorts than any known engraver. "Sa point at son burin sont d'une netteté merveilleuse." Le Clerc was appointed draughtsman and engraver of the Cabinet du Roi in 1690, and in 1706 he was made a "Chevalier Romain" by Clement XI. He died in Paris in 1714. The Elector of Cologne, on hearing of his death, said that he was "un des plus galans hommes qu'il eût connus en France." It is evident from his work that Le Clerc had studied architecture, and his plates of the building of the Louvre and of Perrault's Arc de Triomphe, make one regret that he did not more often apply his extraordinary powers to the illustration of buildings, instead of wasting them on pretty little vignettes, engravings of medals, and very unsatisfactory figures for the use of students in the Academy of Painting. Le Clerc was a finished draughtsman and a beautiful engraver, capable in his way of dealing with any subject, from the Sacrifice of Isaac to the inside of an ostrich, and, perhaps, the wide range of his draughtsmanship explains his failure in individuality. It is impossible to study the work of Jean Le Pautre without feeling that one has been in contact with a strong and ardent nature, but one may examine hundreds of plates by Le Clerc without any impression of personality. Le Clerc seems to me to rank as a first-rate craftsman rather than as a great artist. He was so skilled with his burin that, like Le Pautre, he could work straight away on his plate without any preliminary studies, and the crispness and freedom of his execution are delightful, but he never reached the high imaginative level of Le Pautre.

<sup>1</sup> Mariette says wrongly "architecture and perspective." The earliest mention of Le Clerc's attendances at the Conferences of the Academy that I can find is October 1673. See "Procès-Verbaux de l'Academie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture," ii, 14, 212. The Minutes of this Academy were badly kept, and compare very unfavourably with those kept by Félibien for the Academy of Architecture. For Le Clerc see "Sebastian Le Clerc et son œuvre," par Edouard Meaume, Mariette Abecedario, and Jombert's Catalogue, 1774. In the Fitzwilliam Museum there is a large though not complete collection of the works of Le Clerc. Jombert gives the total number of his engraved plates as 3,412.



Israel Silvestre and the Perelles were topographical draughtsmen of great ability and inestimable value to the student of French seventeenth-century architecture. Silvestre was born at Nancy about 1620, but having lost his father as a child was adopted by an uncle at Paris, and there set himself to learn the fashionable method of pen and ink drawing introduced by Callot. He travelled in France and Italy,<sup>1</sup> and in 1646 Mariette (the founder of the family of Mariette), published his "Alcune Vedute" of gardens and fountains in Rome and Tivoli. In 1649 Silvestre began a series of Perspectives, including the Sorbonne and various famous houses, such as Rincy, Breves, Verger, Bury, Rostang, Chavigny, Tanlay, Pont, Coulommiers, Meudon, Blerancourt, Chilly, Fresnes, Madrid, Richelieu, S. Cloud, Berny, Ancy le Franc, Fremont, and others. The inscription on the title of one of these series (1656) says "Dessiné au naturel." The engravers made their own drawings on the spot, and engraved them afterwards at their leisure. Silvestre was appointed draughtsman in ordinary of the King, and drawing master to the Dauphin. In 1666 he received 2,000 francs, his salary for four months while engaged in drawing the frontier towns of Champagne and Lorraine,<sup>2</sup> and in 1668, 605 francs for two views of the Tuileries from the gardens, and his annual salary of 400 francs in the same year for drawings of architecture, and perspective views of royal houses, "carrousels et autres assemblées." Silvestre was evidently held in high esteem by the King. When his second son, Louis, was baptized in 1669 (Herluison) the godfather was "Louis, Dauphin de France." He was elected a member of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture in 1670,<sup>3</sup> but the first entry of his attendance that I find was in October 1675. Silvestre was a casual and indolent person, who took little interest in academies, and preferred his own amusements, but he was very busily employed at the time. Thus in 1670 he was paid the balance of 19,410 francs for thirty-six plates of the Royal houses.<sup>4</sup> This works out at something like 540 francs a plate, whereas the illustrious Rigaud<sup>5</sup> only received 484 livres for

<sup>1</sup> Mariette mentions an engraving with the inscription, "Israel Silvestre, inventor [*sic*] et fecit, anno Domini 1643, Rome."

<sup>2</sup> "Comptes," i, 100.

<sup>3</sup> See list of members of the Academy 1648-1793, "Archives de l'art Franc.," i, 636.

<sup>4</sup> "Comptes," i, 477.

<sup>5</sup> "État Général des portraits et autres tableaux sortis du pinceau de l'illustre M. Rigaud" ("Mémoires inédits sur les Vies et les ouvrages des membres de l'Académie Royale," ii, 142-168). Rigaud's prices ranged from 11 livres for Madame Dupin in 1681, to 2,000 for the Prince de Conti in 1697.

eighteen portraits in 1681, and 7,040 francs 15 sous for thirty-six portraits in 1693. It is true that Rigaud's studio was so prolific that his prices, at any rate in his earlier days, were little more than those of a successful modern photographer, but it is difficult to understand the large sums that Silvestre received for his work. In 1680 he receives 1,000 francs for two plates of Monceaux and Le Marais, almost four times the amount that was being paid at the same time to Le Pautre and Le Clerc for similar work. The last of these considerable payments was made in 1685. Silvestre died in 1691. In the entry of his death in the registers of S. Germain L'Auxerrois he is described as "dessignateur ordinaire du Roi, maistre à dessigner de Monseigneur le Dauphin et des pages des grandes et petites écuries de Sa Majesté, conseiller du Roy en son Académie royale de peinture et sculpture." In 1760 his grandson, the Sr. Louis de Silvestre, "Ecuyer, directeur de l'Ac. royale de peinture et sculpture, premier peintre du Roy de Pologne electeur de Saxe, et directeur de l'Académie Royale de Dresde, âgé de 85 ans ou environ," was buried in the same church.<sup>1</sup> Israel Silvestre has always seemed to me a somewhat over-rated man. His earlier work, for example, the remarkable little views of Italy in Roundels, published by Langlois, Israel, and Israel Henriët, was clean, crisp, and unhesitating, but he appears to have been spoilt by success. Mariette says that he was a lazy fellow, and his later work became careless and sloppy, giving one the impression that he had lost his interest in his art, and, indeed, was so bored with it that in his latter years he handed it over to one or other of the Perelles to engrave.

The Perelles were a family of engravers, and it is by no means easy to disentangle their work. Gabriel Perelle, the father, born in 1602, was a well-known drawing master and "graveur ordinaire du Roi," skilled in the manufacture of those landscape compositions which became extremely fashionable in Paris in the second half of the seventeenth century. Mariette says of him: "Comme il inventoit tous ses paysages de pratique, et qu'il ne consultoit jamais la nature, l'on n'y trouve aucune variété." Gabriel Perelle (died 1677) had two sons, Nicholas, painter, and Adam, born in Paris in 1638, and it was the latter who made the invaluable views of all the principal houses and gardens in France of the time of Louis XIV. He died in Paris in 1695 (Herluison). I can find out little of his life. His name does not appear in the "Comptes," and he was not a member of either of the Academies. He appears to have gone to Italy, for Mariette published

<sup>1</sup> Herluison.



a series of "Veues de Rome et des environs" made by Perelle. He also engraved some bad drawings of Italian subjects by Asselin, published by Langlois, but by far the greater part of his work consisted of bird's-eye views and perspectives of houses and gardens in and about Paris, and his work in this regard is of the highest value to the student of the art of Louis XIV, many of the buildings shown having been destroyed, and nearly all of them altered since the date of the engravings. Mariette criticizes severely his conventional treatment of landscapes, and his habit of working all over his plates instead of leaving any part of them in suggestion. He also mentions that in his later years he lost his cunning owing to his habitual intemperance. The view, however, of the grotto of Ruel, which is a late work, shows no falling off whatever. It is true that Perelle's landscapes were mainly imaginary; mere impressions of half recollected scenery, such as the precipitous crag, in the far distance at Fontainebleau, and the ranges of hills thrown in when a background seemed to want cheering up, but the whole graphic art of that time was based on convention, the figures on the antique, the landscape on the tradition of the Italian painters of the seventeenth century, ever more and more remote from the light and colour and movement of actual nature. Perelle succeeded in doing what he set out to do, namely, to convey a vivid sense of these old-world gardens and palaces. His firm drawing, and the very completeness of his detail were exactly adapted to convey the impression of grounds and gardens in which nature was severely coerced, design was implicit everywhere, and accidental effects were ruled out of court. Moreover, in spite of his formal methods, Perelle had a remarkable power of getting gradations of tones, so that some of his engravings give the effect of drawings made with a fine pen and washed with Indian ink, such, for example, as some of the plates in the small set of Chantilly.<sup>1</sup> The innumerable little figures, as in the plate of the entrance front to Vaux, or Chambord, or Marly, are as good as those of Callot himself; nor is it exact to say that Perelle was always monotonous in his background. The view of the basin of Latona from the Terrace steps at Versailles shows a storm cloud in the distance treated as freely as in a modern etching. Perelle put a good deal more thought into his work than critics have given him credit for; and, in spite of his convention, he seems to me to have been as supreme in topographical drawing as Le Pautre in his drawings of ornament.

<sup>1</sup> "Diverses Veues de Chantilly dessinées et gravées par Perelle," forty engravings, two to the page.





- Vue générale Fontaine-bleau*  
*Cette Maison Royale est dans le jardin à Versailles de Paris, où l'édification, auant l'année 1661, fut faite de la dernière ville. François I<sup>er</sup> qui introduisit les beaux arts en France, la rebâtit à la Renaissance et Louis le Grand la rendit un séjour de délices. 17. L'étang, la statue de Louis le Grand, la statue de Louis le Grand, la statue de Louis le Grand.*
- |   |                           |                           |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. La Cour du Cheval Blanc                | 7. La Salle du Bal        | 18. La Vallée du Convent  |
| 2. La Galerie d'Ulysse                    | 8. Le Jardin de la Reine  | 19. Le Jardin de l'Étang  |
| 3. La Vierge d'Ulysse                     | 9. La Galerie des Triph.  | 20. Le Parterre du Temple |
| 4. Le Vau de Puiss.                       | 10. La Cour d'ordonnances | 21. Le Temple             |
| 5. La Cour des Fontaines                  | 11. La Cour de la Reine   | 22. La Cascade            |
| 6. La Galerie de François I <sup>er</sup> | 12. La Cour de la Reine   | 23. Le Canal              |
|   | 13. La Fontaine-bleau     | 24. La Chapelle           |
|   | 14. Le Manège             |                           |
|   | 15. Le Mail               |                           |
|   | 16. Le Canal              |                           |

FONTAINE-bleau. DRAWN AND ENGRAVED BY ADAM PERELLE (p. 162)





*Vue de la Grotte de Ruel et d'une partie du Canal et Bassins. -  
A Paris chez L. Mariette rue St. Jacques a la Victoire, et aux Colonnes d'Orleans*

*Gravé par Perelle Avec privil. du Roy*

THE GROTTO, RUEL; CARRIED OUT FOR CARDINAL RICHELIEU (see p. 162)



Perelle had no effectual successor. Rigaud, who brought out a series of views of Paris, Versailles, and the Royal houses in 1752, followed his lines more or less, but possessed nothing like his dexterity. The topographical draughtsmen drifted off into the merely picturesque, finally landing in the sentimentalities of Hubert Robert. Other influences, moreover, were beginning to tell. The Academicians were in earnest in their desire to get at the heart of things, and were not likely to rest content with fancy drawings of architecture, however picturesque and full of sentiment, or with anything less than full chapter and verse, the exact statement to scale of the existing remains of ancient buildings. As the result of Colbert's reorganization, the scientific study of buildings was now being undertaken, no longer by casual students here and there, but on a deliberately organized system; and the French Academy at Rome supplied the machinery. While Perelle was making his views, students of the Academy were drawing and measuring the monuments of ancient Rome, under the competent guidance of Charles Errard and his successor. The "*édifices Antiques de Rome*" of Desgodetz is a landmark in architectural drawing, and though Oppenord proved a renegade, the illustrations of J. F. Blondel's treatises carried on the tradition of accurate and scientific draughtsmanship in which the French have always excelled. It was unfortunate that on to this fine tradition was grafted the spurious archaeology of Quatremère de Quincy and his band of purists. In their zeal for a classical revival they embarked on prodigious schemes of restoration which became the normal practice of the *École des Beaux Arts*, schemes in which the "*vraisemblance*" given by very skilful drawing covered up all sorts of guess work and hypothesis in fact, and in this way pure draughtsmanship, instead of being, as it should be, the handmaid of architecture, came to be regarded as an end in itself. The stress laid on elaborate finish tempts the draughtsman to indulge in extravagant archaeological assumptions, and too often leads him to forget that after all an architect's concern is with the actual materials and methods of construction, and not with their representation on paper. I attribute the neglect of materials in most modern French architecture to this undue concentration on the technique of architectural drawings. Designs so prepared imply as a necessary condition the use of the most accommodating freestone, and preclude those humbler materials of which such excellent use has been made by English architects.



## CHAPTER XII

### ANDRÉ LE NÔTRE

ANDRÉ LE NÔTRE is one of the most attractive figures on the crowded stage of the Court of Louis XIV. Loyal, candid, and sincere, he stands out among his colleagues as a man of transparent honesty and single-minded enthusiasm for his art. Even Saint-Simon lowers his rod when he speaks of Le Nôtre, and refers to him in terms as nearly approaching affection as that exclusive aristocrat ever permitted himself to use. To Saint-Simon Le Nôtre stood for all those qualities the absence of which he regarded as so deplorable in Jules Hardouin Mansart. Le Nôtre was born in 1613,<sup>1</sup> and was the son of Jean Le Nôtre, the official gardener of the Tuileries gardens. It appears from a passage in Guillet de S. Georges'<sup>2</sup> account of Lerambert, the sculptor, that Le Nôtre learnt drawing in the studio of Vouet, and that it was here that he made the acquaintance of Le Brun and Lerambert, his fellow students and afterwards life-long friends and associates at Versailles. Where Le Nôtre received any training in architecture does not appear, but it is certain that he received it somewhere, for the business of a gardener in the seventeenth century was not merely to keep gardens in order, but also to design their parterres and the whole scheme of their laying out. Thus, in 1643, Louis XIII confirms the appointment of Claude Mollet, "pour son jardinier ordinaire et dessinateur des plans parcs et jardins qui se feront en ses maisons Royales" at a salary of 1,000 livres a year.<sup>3</sup>

Le Nôtre is first mentioned officially in a brevet by Louis XIII, dated 26 January 1637, in which the King grants to André Le Nôtre the charge of the gardens of the Tuileries, at present held by Jean Le Nôtre, who had retired in favour of his son on condition that the

<sup>1</sup> Piganiol de la Force, "Description de Versailles."

<sup>2</sup> "Mémoires inédits," etc., i, 330.

<sup>3</sup> "Archives de l'art Français," v, 272.

charge was continued to the survivor without further confirmation. André was to take oath, and the Sr. de Gougis, captain of the Tuileries, was to place him in charge of the gardens, "après qu'il sera apparu de bonne vie mœurs et religion Catholique apostolique Romaine dudit André le Nôtre fils, et d'y celui prins et receu le serment en tel cas requis et accoustumé." This office carried with it a lodging in the Tuileries, either in the palace or in a separate house in the gardens,<sup>1</sup> and Le Nôtre held the office for fifty-five years till he resigned it in 1692 in favour of his nephews, and prayed the King to grant to his nephews, Michel Le Bouteux and Claude Desgots,<sup>2</sup> "la survivance de sa charge de dessinateur des plants et parterres de ces jardins, et a cet effet de séparer lad charge en deux." The charge was duly divided, but only Le Bouteux was appointed at 600 livres. In 1700 Mansart filled up the other vacant post by appointing a certain Dufresny de Rivière.

The first known work of Le Nôtre was the garden of Vaux Le Vicomte for Fouquet, between 1656 and 1661, when it appears to have been completed. The house stood more or less on level ground rising to higher ground at some distance from the back of the house. This gave Le Nôtre the opportunity for his favourite motive, which became the keynote of his designs wherever he had the chance. Near the house he kept the ground level except for low terraces, and here he placed his parterres, but on the higher ground opposite the garden front of the house he formed a level plateau with a water-piece and grand fountain, and below this he constructed a very elaborate grotto known as the fountain of Neptune, and a canal running right and left, 120 feet wide and 3,000 feet long. The space between this and the house was occupied by a wide central walk, flanked on either side by eight small jets and parterres with fountains; then came a flight of steps and a large circular basin with a fountain, and beyond this the central walk continued up to the terraces in front of the house, with very large and elaborate "Parterres de Broderie" on either side. It appears from Perelle's view of the garden front that, after crossing the moat round the house, one descended a flight of steps to a long terrace

<sup>1</sup> Guillet de S. Georges refers to "la Cabinet de sa maison du jardin des Tuileries," but he also mentions a group of three children by Van Obstal at the Tuileries, "au dessus de la porte du logement de M. Le Nôtre" ("Mémoires," i, 134, 175).

<sup>2</sup> Desgots was a student in the Academy at Rome with Daviler. In 1676 the Director reported "Le Sr. Desgots, architecte et neveu de M. Le Nôtre est un jeune garçon qui a volonté de faire quelque chose de bon, et y fait son possible" ("Correspondance," i, 64).



extending right and left the full width of the gardens, and from this to a second terrace, which was returned on either side of the central garden, running out like jetties, and separating it from the side gardens. The design was full of detail, yet the main idea was straightforward enough. In all the best designs of Le Nôtre the same characteristic features are found—great breadth and simplicity in the general scheme, the utmost use of difference of levels, direct and unbroken vistas, leading to dominant features, such as the grotto and cascades<sup>1</sup> at the farther end of the garden, and, lastly, the lavish employment of water as a means of effect in cascades, canals, fountains, and water-pieces. Where Le Nôtre found woods already on the site, he used them in a very skilful manner as a massed background to his gardens, sometimes running back into them with some architectural feature, but never losing his boundaries. He invariably marked the limits of his garden with definite and formal lines of hedges. Although in his later work he carried his design outside the garden limits by avenues and “pattes d'oie” taken out into the country for miles, there was never any question in the mind of Le Nôtre as to the relations of art and nature. His design throughout showed a frank and splendid disregard of the ways of nature left to its own devices, and the claims for a sort of deification of nature advanced with such unction by the landscape gardeners in the eighteenth century would have been simply unintelligible to Le Nôtre and his contemporaries.

How Le Nôtre arrived at his manner it is difficult to say. Not that it was entirely new, for avenues and parterres had existed long before in France. They are found in the drawings of J. A. Du Cerceau, but Le Nôtre recast the material that he found to hand, and only a man of unusual ability could have given such an extraordinary development to French methods of garden design. Hitherto the French garden had been relatively modest. It had its terraces, its berceaux, its parterres, even its avenues, but all on a limited scale, and the chief efforts of garden designers, such as Claude Mollet, had been devoted to the design of ingenious and elaborate parterres. The designs by Claude Mollet of “compartments” in the gardens of the Tuileries and S. Germain-en-Laye given in the “Théâtre d'Agriculture,” are typical.<sup>2</sup> De Serres makes suggestions as to the flowers to

<sup>1</sup> Perelle engraved a remarkable view of the cascades at Vaux from a drawing by Israel Silvestre.

<sup>2</sup> “Le Théâtre d'Agriculture et Mesnage de Champs d'Olivier de Serres, Seigneur du Pradel,” 1603, pp. 535-546.





*Vue en perspective des Cascades de Vaux.*  
D'après le dessin de M. de La Vallée.

*Vue en Perspective des Cascades de Vaux.*

*D'après le dessin de M. de La Vallée.*

VAUX-LE-VICOMTE. THE CASCADES (see p. 165)



1 Le Canal de 500 toises de longueur sur 20 de largeur. 2 La Fontaine de Neptune qui est au milieu du Canal, terminant agréablement l'aspect du Jardin. Elle est bâtie de grès et ornée de Termes rustiques, entre lesquels sont des niches avec des rochers d'où sort de l'eau qui suint de la grande gerbe, 3 La Grotte de grès qui est derrière et plus haut, l'inégalité du terrain faisant des scènes aussi agréables que différentes. Cette Grotte est du dessin du St. Le Nostre. 4 La Gerbe d'eau.

*A Paris chez M. Langlois rue de la Victoire. Avec Permission du Roi.*

VAUX-LE-VICOMTE. THE GROTTO (see p. 165)

(See also opposite p. 57)

[Perelle





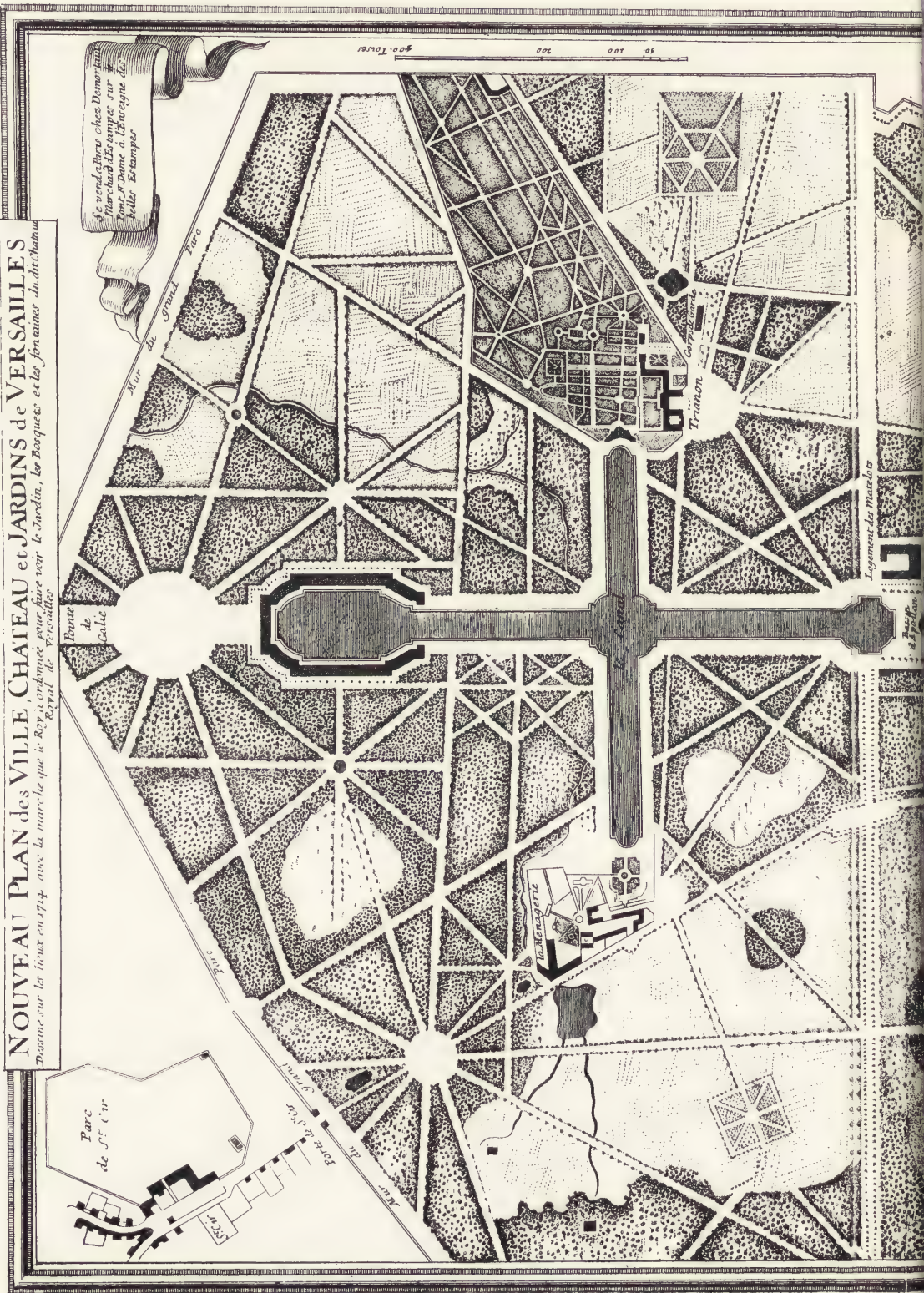
be used, but he also relied on coloured earths and the like to make out his parterres, and in order that these should be intelligible, he recommends that they should always be seen from the terraces, and the effect heightened by statues, columns, obelisks, and pyramids of marble. Thus, he says, the garden would be "très magnifique." De Serres was a country gentleman, and not a designer of gardens, but it is clear that in the time of Henri IV, and indeed till Le Nôtre appeared, French ideas of garden design were still limited, they were still unconsciously influenced by the "hortus inclusus" of mediaeval times. The gardens of Anet, Gaillon, Vallery, or Blois, as shown in Du Cerceau's bird's-eye views, are relatively small in regard to the houses. Charleval, never completed, was designed on a more ambitious scale, but one and all show the same motive—a garden set out in symmetrical rectangular plots or compartments, and jealously guarded by an enclosing wall and a covered walk, and this continued to be the normal type of French garden till the middle of the seventeenth century. The genius of Le Nôtre revolutionized the whole idea of the garden, greatly to its loss from the point of view of the gardener, that is, the grower of flowers and plants, but from a larger point of view immensely to its gain. Whether he had gone to Italy as a student is not known. He was certainly acquainted with the great scale of the Italian gardens, their splendid use of terraces, statuary, water, and the natural features of the ground. But it is by no means the case that Le Nôtre introduced this wholesale into France. What he did do, was to take the French garden as he found it, greatly develop it in the light of what had been done in Italy without losing its characteristic national quality.

Le Nôtre conceived of the house and grounds as one complete composition, in which the main object of the design was to make the most of the ground, its levels, its water, generally its natural features, with a view to setting off the house to the best advantage. He might fairly have said with Cicero, "*Hortos magnificentissimos aedificavi*," for his designs involved not much less building than the house itself. Moreover, in the vast extent of his schemes, in the avenues that he led away from the gardens into the country, he made the house and garden the central feature, not merely of the ground in its immediate neighbourhood, but of the entire estate. He was far from ignoring the use of flowers, the difference was that instead of subordinating his garden to horticulture, he used flowers as he used grass, trees and water as so many means of producing a definite effect as a whole. It is a point of

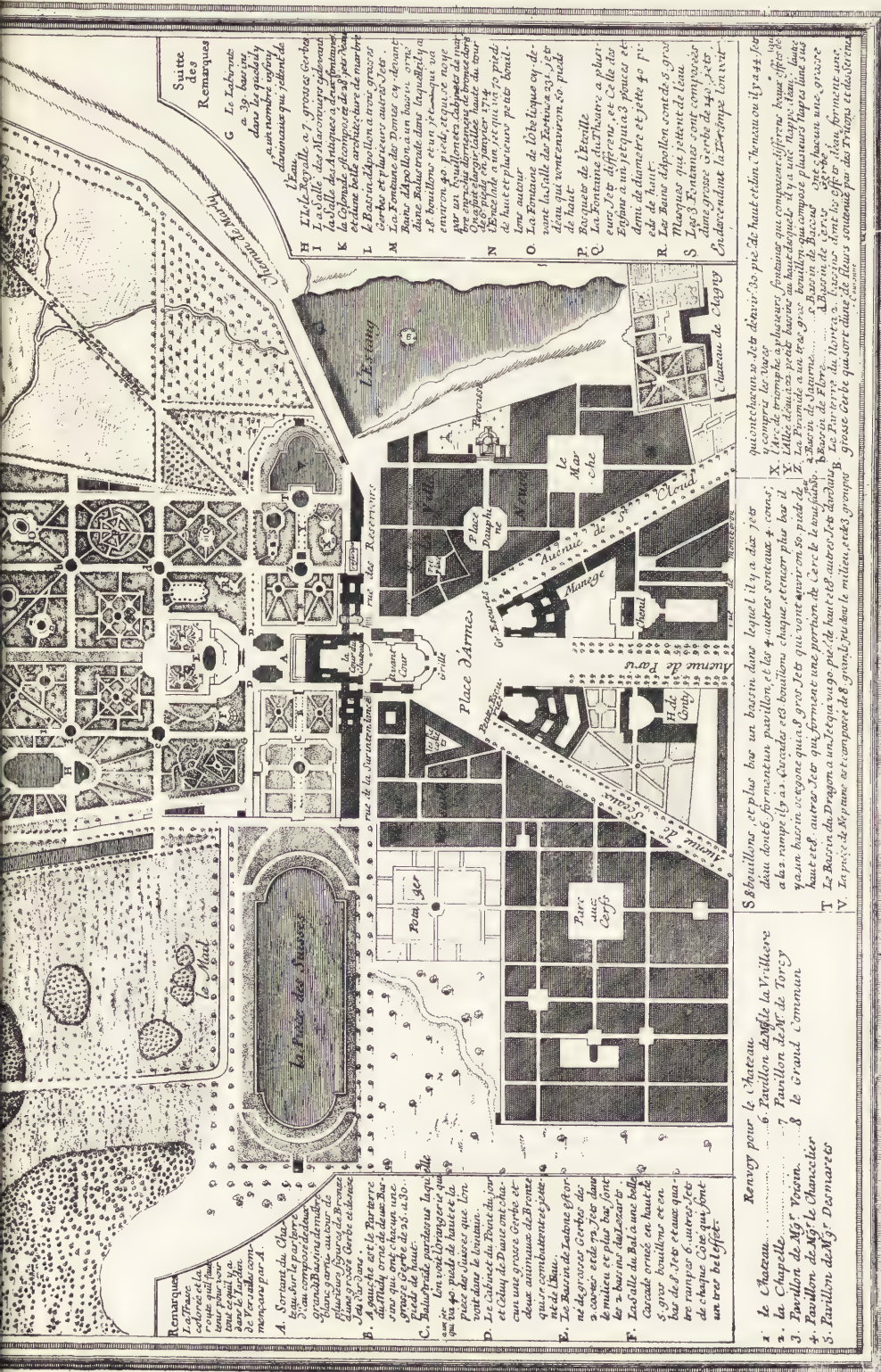


NOUVEAU PLAN des VILLE, CHATEAU et JARDINS de VERSAILLES  
*Royal de Versailles*  
 on trouve sur les lieux en 1714 avec la marche que le Roy a ordonné pour faire voir le Jardin, les Marquises et les fontaines du dit Chateau

passage sur les lieux en 1714 avec la marche que le Roy a ordonnée pour faire voir le Jardin, les Bosquets et les fontaines du dit Chateau  
Royal de Versailles







PLAN OF VERSAILLES, 1714. BY MENANT (see p. 170)  
(FROM DEMORTAIN, "LES PLANS, ETC., DE VERSAILLES")







4 le por-à-cheval.  
5 le nouveau chemin de Versailles.

Cette du Jardin des Tuileries comme il est à présent  
à Paris chez J. Mariette rue St. Jacques à la boutique aux Presses du 23. devient en gros par Brelle

1 la Porte de la Concorde avec  
le Louvre de la Reine.  
Mendon.

[Penelle

THE GARDENS OF THE TUILERIES AS LAID OUT BY LE NOTRE (p. 168)





THE AQUEDUCT OF MAINTENON, FROM A DRAWING BY REGINALD PLOMFIELD (SEE P. 171)

d'Espagne" must have been exceedingly troublesome to grow, and apparently the Treasury got tired of it, for in 1678 the 5,000 francs was cut down to a total of 1,375 francs, and in the year following opposite each of these three entries is the ominous "néant." But in 1679 the items cheerfully reappear, 3,500 for the new parterres, 2,500 for the "parterres en gazon," 1,500 for the flower garden, and 1,500 for the "espalier de jasmin." In 1680 Le Nôtre received a general "gratification" of 3,000 francs for his care of the royal gardens,<sup>1</sup> and in his latter years he received pretty regularly a gratification of 3,000 francs for services generally on the Royal Buildings.<sup>2</sup> There is no mention of fees paid to Le Nôtre for the design of specific works. This seems to have been regarded as part of his official duty, and his salary appears to have been made up in this irregular and miscellaneous way for the convenience of the Treasury officials; for the "Espalier de jasmin d'Espagne" could hardly have required a regular expenditure every year for thirty years. The "travail extraordinaire" mentioned above must have referred to his work at Versailles. The "Comptes" for 1664 show that work was proceeding here in that year, and was steadily carried on year after year, but it was not till 1669-70 that the garden was begun in real earnest. In Patel's view of Versailles (1667) all that is shown of the gardens are a square garden to the right and left, and a garden opposite the palace, beyond which apparently a wide avenue had been formed on the site of what a few years later was to be the Grand Canal. In the six years 1664-70 some 467,951 francs had been spent on the gardens with only one item for excavation. In 1670 occurs the first entry of "Fouilles de Terres," and this rapidly increased till in 1680 the total for excavation in the year was 931,506 francs 9 sous 7 deniers. The canals and water-pieces, and the various works in connection with the first orangery, were included

<sup>1</sup> "Comptes," i, 1350.

<sup>2</sup> It is very difficult to ascertain the net amounts of salaries actually received by the royal officials, as in addition to these salaries there were all sorts of odd payments. Thus in 1691 Le Nôtre received the following sums:

3,000 francs for services on buildings.

875 „ for care of the grand parterre.

625 „ for care of the parterres de broderie.

375 „ for the little flower garden.

375 „ for our old friend the "espalier de jasmin d'Espagne."

5,440 „ as controller general.

1,200 „ for designs of gardens and parterres. Total 13,581 francs.

Eight years later Mansart managed to accumulate on himself over 60,000 francs in salary alone.



in this sum, the total for earthwork alone in 1670-80 reaching the enormous sum of 3,332,684 francs 16 sous 7 deniers, whereas the total expenditure on the gardens themselves was less than a third of this, viz., 942,598 francs 5 sous 6 deniers. There is no getting away from the fact that the methods of Le Nôtre took no account of cost whatsoever. At Versailles as at Vaux the motive is again the simple one of gardens to right and left, subordinate to the central gardens on the axis line of the palace, the vista being carried out to the remote distance by means of the "allée Royale" and the Canal, but on this straightforward scheme Le Nôtre embroidered all sorts of variations. Instead of the usual parterre in front of the house, he used here the Parterre d'Eau which he used afterwards with such excellent effect at Chantilly, and instead of the broad expanse of a garden the full width of the house as at Vaux, Le Nôtre placed the fountain of Latona and two parterres on the axis line, and reduced the open space to the width of the "allée Royale" about 300 feet wide, which was flanked on either side by formal plantations, each different in plan and each containing one of the marvels of Versailles. Having thus concentrated the attention of the spectator on the main vista, Le Nôtre opened out his design again with the fountain of Apollo and the great spaces of the Grand Canal.<sup>1</sup> The effect, when both the fountains of Latona and Apollo were in full play in the sunlight, with the immense length of the Canal behind it, must have been very splendid, and in criticizing Versailles, it has to be borne in mind that Le Nôtre relied for his brilliant effects on the constant play of water everywhere, water at rest and water in incessant movement, against the green background of foliage, the gleam of white marble and the rich gold of his "bronze doré" everywhere. In all Perelle's views<sup>2</sup> of the gardens—except the Labyrinth—water is shown and noted as the principal feature. Nor was it only

<sup>1</sup> Perelle gives the length of the Canal as 750 toises (4,500 feet), the width 40 toises (240 feet), the depth 7 feet. The Canal which intersects it, running from the old Ménagerie to the grand Trianon, he gives as 450 toises long. The Canal was begun in 1668. The final payment to the Contractor for excavation and earthwork on a contract of 482,900 francs was made in 1678. "Comptes," i, 1061.

<sup>2</sup> "Veues des plus Beaux endroits de Versailles." These were made before 1681 and thus fix the dates of the works. They include the following:

La Fontaine de la Pyramide.

The "Parterre d'eau" (altered after 1670).

The Cascades.

The grotto of Thetis (destroyed to make way for the north wing).

La Fontaine de la Girandole. Fontaine des Bains d'Apollon.

La Fontaine du Cabinet de Diane.

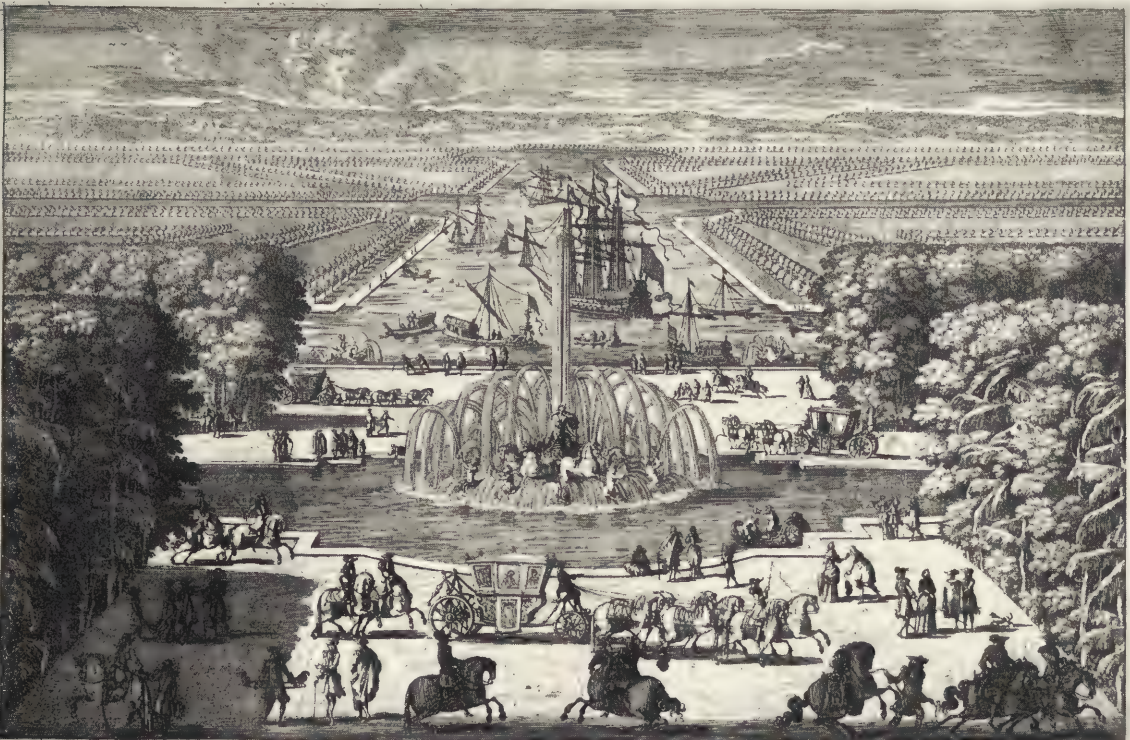




LE BASSIN DE LATONE est situé au-dessous du pavillon d'Apollon, dans la demi-lune, en face à cheval trois statues de marbre blanc qui sont au milieu représente Latone, et ses enfants. Les Paysans champois, en grenouilles, sont représentés de différentes figures de bronze dont aucun lieu qui a 44 grenouilles qui sont sur le bord du bassin. Il y a aux deux côtés deux autres bassins où sont des Paysans aussi changés en grenouilles, et autour de ces bassins des Lézards et des tortues, le tout de bronze doré.  
 Dessiné par M. de la Harpe, gravé par M. de la Harpe, à Paris chez M. Mariette, rue d'Anjou le Vieux, avec privilège.

[Perelle]

VERSAILLES—LE BASSIN DE LATONE (see p. 162)

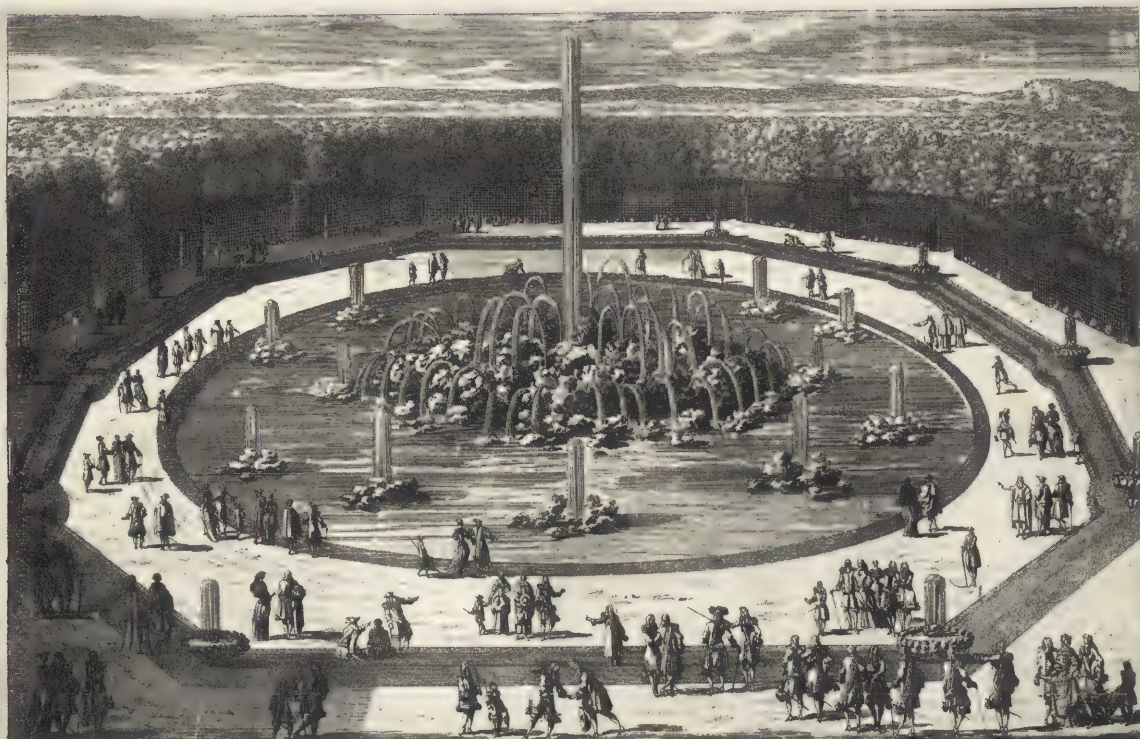


LE BASSIN D'APOLLON est situé au-dessous du pavillon d'Apollon, dans la demi-lune, en face à cheval trois statues de marbre blanc qui sont au milieu représente Apollon, et ses enfants. Les Paysans champois, en grenouilles, sont représentés de différentes figures de bronze dont aucun lieu qui a 44 grenouilles qui sont sur le bord du bassin. Il y a aux deux côtés deux autres bassins où sont des Paysans aussi changés en grenouilles, et autour de ces bassins des Lézards et des tortues, le tout de bronze doré.  
 Dessiné par M. de la Harpe, gravé par M. de la Harpe, à Paris chez M. Mariette, rue d'Anjou le Vieux, avec privilège.

[Perelle]

VERSAILLES—LE BASSIN D'APOLLON (p. 170)

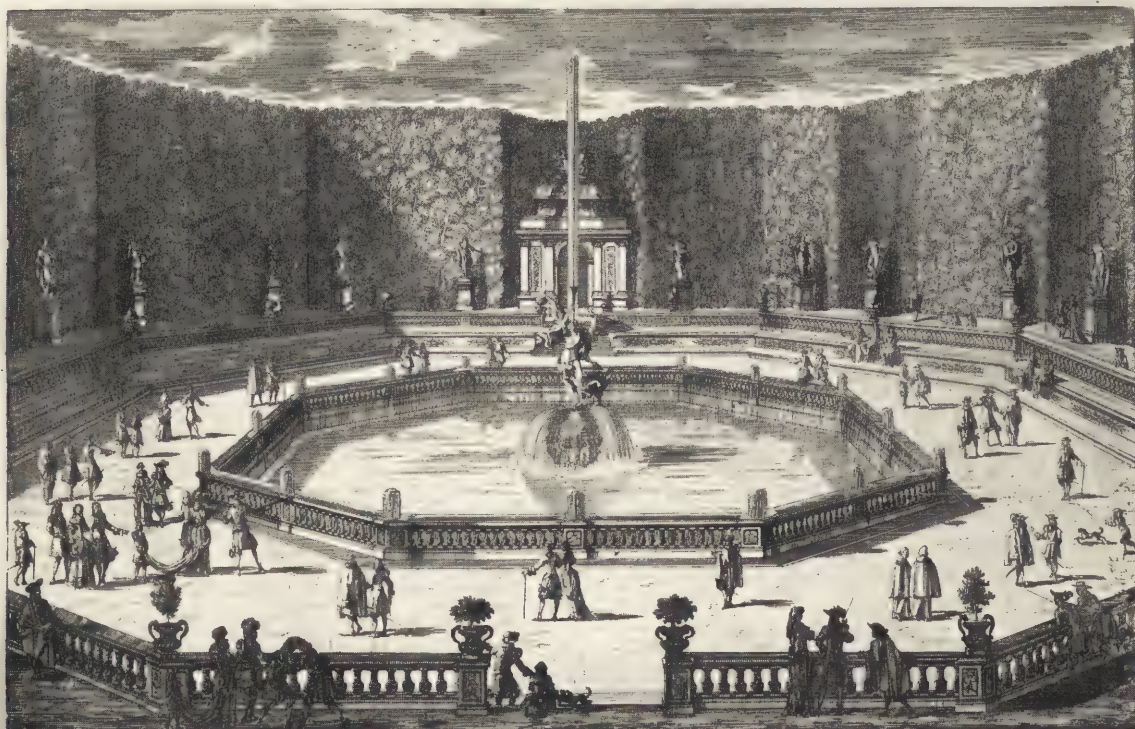




LE BASSIN D'ENCELADE représente ce Géant assailli sous les rochers qu'il avoit autrefois entassés les uns sur les autres pour escalader le Ciel. Ce qui parait de la figure est quatre fois plus grand que Nature. de sa bouche sort un jet d'eau de la grosseur du bras et de 24 pieds de haut. Le bassin d'Encelade est situé près de celui d'Europe à main droite dans le bois à Versailles. A Paris chez M. de la Motte, rue St. Jacques à la Victoire. Paris, 1711.

VERSAILLES—LE BASSIN D'ENCELADE (p. 171)

[Perelle



LA FONTAINE DE LA RENOMMÉE est sur le Bassin d'Encelade. Le jet d'eau est de la grosseur du bras et de 24 pieds de haut. Le bassin est entouré d'une balustrade de bronze dorée avec des statues de la Renommée qui ont un miroir de la Renommée. Le bassin est entouré d'une balustrade de bronze dorée avec des statues de la Renommée qui ont un miroir de la Renommée. Le bassin est entouré d'une balustrade de bronze dorée avec des statues de la Renommée qui ont un miroir de la Renommée. A Paris chez M. de la Motte, rue St. Jacques à la Victoire. Paris, 1711.

VERSAILLES—LA FONTAINE DE LA RENOMMÉE (p. 171)

[Perelle



for its sheen and movement that Le Nôtre loved water so dearly. A contemporary account (1688) of the gardens of Chantilly describes the grand cascade as "toute remplie de gradins, de lances, de nappes, de bouillons d'eau et de marches sur lesquelles et des deux côtés, l'eau se brise avec un murmure agréable," and in a picture of Condé at Chantilly Bossuet<sup>1</sup> wrote: "qu'il embellit cette magnifique et délicieuse maison, ou qu'il conduisit ses amis dans ses superbes allées, au bruit de tant de jets d'eau qui ne se taisaient ni jour ni nuit, c'était toujours le même homme et sa gloire le suivait partout." It was for its music, for the murmur of running water, as well as for its beauty that great Frenchmen of the time of Louis XIV sought for water at almost any cost. There was much that was irrational and exaggerated in the garden design of that time, but any fair appreciation of it should take account of all the resources on which it relied for its effect, its ordered symmetry, its carefully calculated scale, its admirable sculpture set off by a tapestry of foliage, the flowers in its parterres, and not least of all the music and the movement of running water. Criticism of these gardens in their present state, when the fountains are dry and the parterres neglected, is unfair, and irrelevant.

The weak point of the whole enterprise of the gardens of Versailles was that it attempted the impossible. The question of water supply became and has always been a great difficulty. It brought about the disastrous enterprise of the aqueduct of Maintenon and the never-ending expense of the Machine of Marly. Prior to 1668, the few fountains and water-pieces at Versailles were supplied with water raised from the lake in front of Clagny by three windmills and a pump worked by two horses. In 1668 François and Pierre Francini<sup>2</sup>

La Fontaine de La Renommée.

La Fontaine du Satyr.

La Fontaine de L'Étoile ou Montagne d'Eau.

Les Trois Fontaines.

Bassin de Latone ("des Paysans changez en grenouilles sont representez en bronze doré").

Bassin de Ceres. Bassin de Bacchus.

Bassin de Saturne. Bassin d'Encelade.

Bassin de Flora. Bassin de l'Isle d'amour ou l'Isle Royale.

Cascades of the bassin de l'Isle d'amour.

Salle du Bal. Salle des Festins. Le Théâtre d'Eau.

L'arc de Triomphe. La galerie d'Eau. La Colonnade with jets between each pair of columns.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by M. Macon, "Chantilly," p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> The Francini belonged to the family of Italian hydraulic engineers who settled in France in the sixteenth century. Their names constantly recur in the "Comptes."



were employed to conduct the waters of the Bièvre to Versailles. Fresh reservoirs were made, including one on the site of the north wing, which is still shown on the plan of 1714, and efforts were made to collect all the surface water available. Large ponds were dug in the higher ground above S. Cyr to collect rain water, but the supply constantly failed, and in 1681 Arnold de Ville and René Sualem of Liège constructed the machine de Marly to bring the water of the Seine to Versailles. This was completed in 1685, but the water was then used for Marly instead of Versailles,<sup>1</sup> and Louvois, anxious to commend himself to the King by some prodigious enterprise, was already thinking of obtaining the necessary supply from the Eure. In 1684 de La Hire took the levels, and in spite of the advice of Vauban, who proposed to syphon the water, Louvois decided on the aqueduct of Maintenon, consulted the Academy of Architecture on its construction, and began the work in 1685. After ten years' work, an expenditure of nearly 7,000,000 francs, and the loss of countless lives, the whole thing had to be abandoned. Among all the extravagances of Versailles the obstinate efforts to supply it with water were the worst. The King, badly advised, and with the confidence of supreme ignorance, attempted the impossible on a site where there was not only no good supply of water in existence, but no means of obtaining it. He insisted on attempting what the Italians with their magnificent natural supplies of water could do with perfect ease and at little cost. Colbert did his best to divert the King from his folly; Le Nôtre, honest, but easy going, and enthusiastic for his schemes, was not the man to dissuade him, and Louvois, resolute and unscrupulous, with Mansart as his ready instrument, was mainly occupied with diverting the royal attention from inconvenient questions and preserving his own paramount position.

For an account of the admirable sculpture in the gardens of Versailles, the works of Girardon, Coysevox, Caffieri, Desjardins, Tubi, Regnaudin, Buyster, Larambert, Gilles Guerin, the two Marsy, Lehongre, and others, I must refer the reader to the works of M. Pierre de Nolhac<sup>2</sup> and M. Cazes. It includes some of the finest examples to be found in the whole range of French sculpture, and Le Nôtre was fortunate in his colleagues, and also from the point of view

<sup>1</sup> De Cazes, "Château de Versailles," p. 547. See also M. Barbet, "Les Grandes Eaux de Versailles."

<sup>2</sup> "Histoire du Château de Versailles," Paris, 1899-1900, by Pierre de Nolhac. "Le Château de Versailles," E. Cazes, 1910.

from which he himself approached his art, in having always available the advice of that master of *mise-en-scène*, his old friend and fellow-student, Charles Le Brun. The two had much in common. Both men cherished large theatrical conceptions of their art, and everything went well till the death of Colbert. Unfortunately the control and direction of the arts at the Court of Louis XIV was a political matter. It had little relation to the qualifications of artists, and the chief determining factors were the minister in power and the whispers of the reigning mistress in the ear of the King. The first act of Louvois was to supersede Le Brun by Mignard, and to subordinate Le Nôtre to Mansart, who owed his introduction to the Court to Le Nôtre himself. Nor was Mansart the man to yield to any weak suggestions of loyalty or gratitude; when he saw a chance he seized it without scruple, and not content with his vast works in the Palace, encroached on the province of Le Nôtre, and succeeded in persuading the King to allow him to carry out his costly and preposterous design of the "Colonnade," on a plot on the West side of the *allée Royale*.<sup>1</sup>

The gardens at Versailles appear from the "Comptes" to have been completed by 1687, after that year the entries are for maintenance only. Thus in 1687 the cost was 219,634 livres, 17 sous, 6 deniers, whereas in 1695 it was only 8,482 livres, 17 sous, 11 deniers. Saint-Simon gibes at the desolate appearance of the trees and bushes, but all that money could do to forestall nature was done. With incredible meanness, a large number of shrubs were transported from Vaux to Versailles in 1665.<sup>2</sup> In 1668 there are entries for 5,800, 30,000, and 12,000 small elms for the nurseries, of 14,300 small chestnuts and 6,350 yoke-elms for the plantations, and a sum of 13,980 francs was paid the Receiver-General of Artois for 10,340 Dutch elms, 830 *bois blancs*, and 68 limes, bought in Flanders and carted to Versailles.<sup>3</sup> Thousands of cases of box were bought for the parterres, and there are entries in the "Comptes" of large payments for flowers of all sorts—tulips, oriental hyacinths, narcissus of Constantinople, jacinth, and every sort of bulb that would stand being transplanted. Here is a characteristic entry from the "Comptes" for

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon says that this occurred during the absence of Le Nôtre in Italy, but Le Nôtre was there in 1679, the Colonnade was not begun till 1684-5 (see "Comptes," ii, 604, 1186), and was finished in 1687.

<sup>2</sup> "Comptes," i, 83, 102, "arbrisseaux" were carted from Vaux to the Tuileries and Versailles.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 257. I do not know what "bois blanc" is. It appears from another entry that 69,652 francs were spent on the "fourniture et regarnissement" of trees at Versailles and Vincennes between 1664 and 1668.



1687 (ii, 1216): "à lui pour 27,000 oignons d'hyacinthe de différentes espèces, 12,500 tulipes, 2,150 hyacinthes à panache, 7,100 iris bulbeux, 13,900 crocus, 150 colchiques doubles, 1,800 frétiliaires, 300 narcisses non-pareilles, et deux boisseaux d'oignons de perseneiges." Le Nôtre, till his design became set and mannered under the influence of the Court at Versailles, had been fully alive to the beauty of flowers. Madame de Sévigné, writing to her daughter in 1675, says: "Nous allûmes à Clagny.<sup>1</sup> Que vous dirai-je? C'est le palais d'Armide. Le Bâtiment s'élève à vûe d'œil. Les jardins sont faits. Vous connoissez la manière du Nôtre, il a laissé un petit bois sombre qui fait fort bien. Il y a un petit bois d'orangers dans de grandes caisses, on s'y promène; ce sont des allées, où l'on est à l'ombre, et pour cacher les caisses, il y a des deux côtes, des palissades à hauteur d'appui, toutes fleuries de tubéreuses, de roses, de jasmins, d'œillets, c'est assurément la plus belle la plus surprenante la plus enchantée nouveauté qui se puisse imaginer, on aime fort ce bois."<sup>2</sup> "On s'y promène" was the keynote to the whole design—no games were played, if there was a "boulingrin" it was not a place for playing bowls, but a compartment of the garden, and according to Saint-Simon, in his latter days Le Nôtre had a poor opinion of parterres, entirely endorsed by Saint-Simon. "Car c'est où on ne se promène jamais."<sup>3</sup>

The gardens of Versailles and the Terrace of S. Germain-en-Laye were the most important works designed and carried out by Le Nôtre for the King. The great terrace at S. Germain was constructed from his designs (1669-70), and in October, 1671, he received a sum of 4,000 francs for his "travail extraordinaire" during the last two years at Versailles and S. Germain, in the gardens, terraces, and other works.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The first work of J. H. Mansart. Piganiol de la Force in his description of Versailles says that it was at Clagny that Le Nôtre first introduced "des portiques des Treillages des Berceaux et des Cabinets," and that at first these were made by Dutchmen. This must refer to the trellis work very fashionable at the end of the seventeenth century, and fully illustrated in Perelle's engravings of Chantilly, the gardens of Chaville near Versailles and elsewhere. The "Berceaux" of the sixteenth century were different, being constructed of very solid framework.

<sup>2</sup> "Lettres," ed. 1773, ii, 46.

<sup>3</sup> "Il disait des parterres qu'ils n'étaient bons que pour les nourrices qui ne pouvant quitter leur enfants, s'y promenaient des yeux et les admiraient du deuxième étage" (Saint-Simon).

<sup>4</sup> "Comptes," i, 431. The cost of earthwork at S. Germain, 1670-71, amounted to 225,696 francs. In addition to this Le Nôtre designed the parterre, and three fountains that once existed on the east side of the Château on the site of the Gare de l'ouest. It is shown on an engraving by Perelle.





S. GERMAIN EN LAYE. du côté du jardin est la plus large façade des cinq qui en composent le parterre, et dans laquelle est l'appartement du Roi, dépayé en dehors par un balcon de fer doré, qui règne alentour. La terrasse qui a été faite devant la cour s'écroule du fossé, sert pour passer de la cour des cuisines dans le Parc, et aller au mail qui n'est pas depuis peu sur le dessin de M. le Nôtre, ainsi que le parterre sous les 3 fontaines.

(Paris 1701. Mais cette vue, d'ailleurs, du Vaucluse, avec l'escalier du Roi, fait par Perru.

[Perru]

S. GERMAIN-EN-LAYE—THE GARDEN, BY LE NÔTRE (p. 174)



LE GRAND PARTIERRE DE TRIANON DE S. CLOUD en est la Fontaine de l'eau du jardin, à laquelle on voit cette Croix de bois, sur un char, en forme de queue de cheval, et en fait amener, qui tient en parade, formant une nappe d'eau, à ses côtés sont 4 fontaines en soufflant dans leurs tuyaux, n'ont servie en boudin d'eau, ces figures sont à l'usage de la Parterre en 3, l'invention du S. le Nôtre.

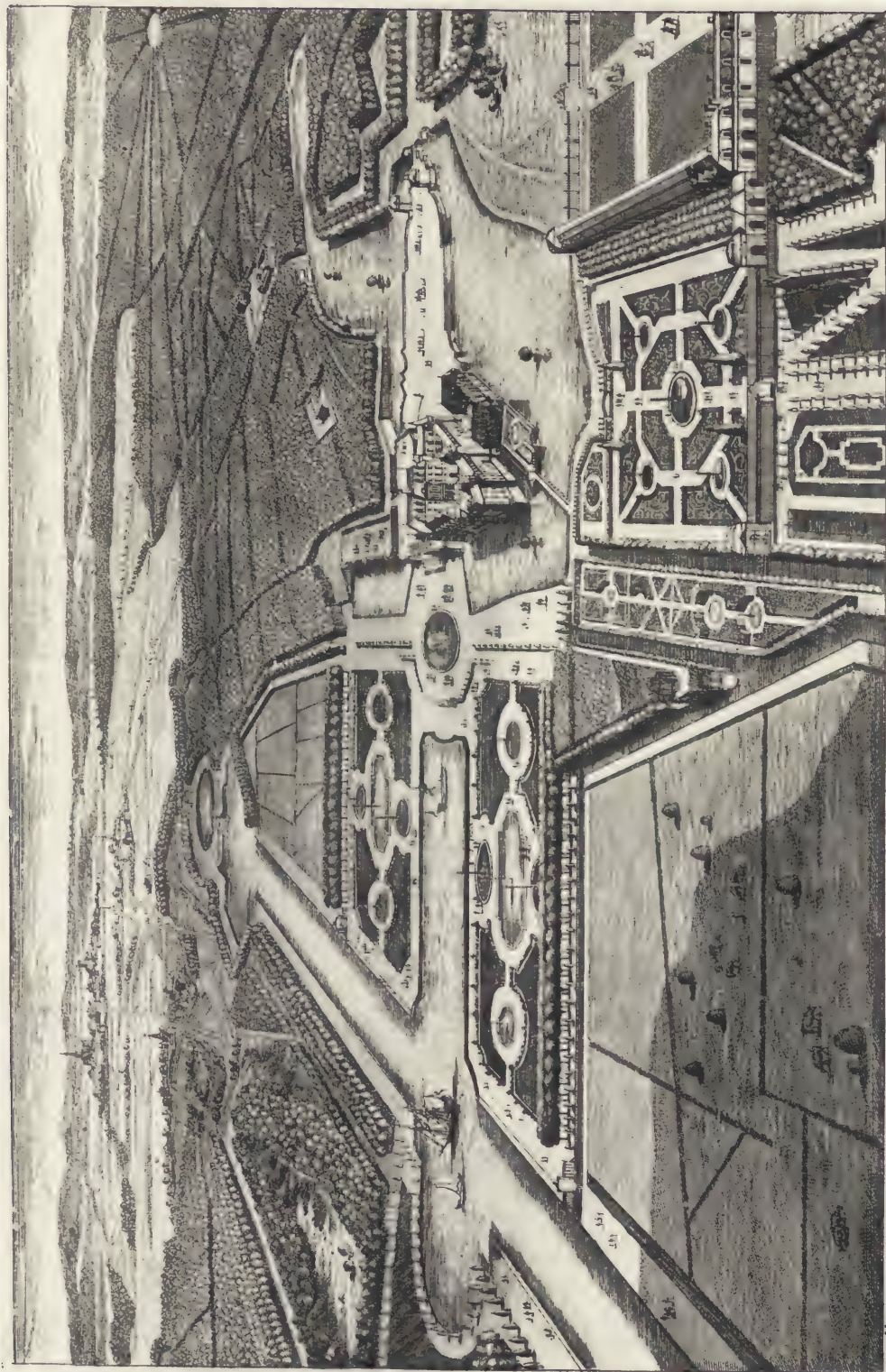
(Paris 1701. Mais cette vue, d'ailleurs, du Vaucluse, avec l'escalier du Roi, fait par Perru.

[Perru]

S. CLOUD—THE TRIANON. BY GOBERT (see p. 176)

[I. TO FACE P. 174





VEUE GENERALE DE CHANTILLY du côté des Jardins

*A Paris chez L. Mariette rue St. Jacques à la Victoire. Avec Privilège du Roi.*

*Perrill.*

CHANTILLY. THE GROUNDS AND GARDENS AS LAID OUT BY LE NOTRE. (p. 175)

The Terrace at S. Germain is 3,200 yards long and 40 yards wide; with its magnificent position it is, perhaps, the finest thing of its kind in existence, and its great scale and bold simplicity show the genius of Le Nôtre at his best.

Meanwhile Le Nôtre had been extensively employed on private work. The Grand Condé, never quite trusted by Louis XIV after the Fronde, had retired to Chantilly, and here, with the help of Le Nôtre, he carried out a complete remodelling of the gardens on a scale second only to Versailles. The work was begun about 1663,<sup>1</sup> and a great part of it completed by 1671, when Condé entertained the King, and Vatel killed himself in despair because the fish was not delivered in time for dinner.<sup>2</sup> The grand approach, the forecourt and the "Grand Degré," the flight of stairs by Gittard leading to the principal garden, and the Canal were begun in 1673. The gardens of Chantilly, as they now exist, give little idea of the glories of the Grand Condé. The hand of the improver and the landscape gardener has been heavy in the place. The house but vaguely recalls the days of the old Constable, or of that younger Duke executed by Richelieu; a great part of the formal garden has been swept away, and the Canal and the Water Garden alone remain to suggest the magnificence, almost the megalomania, of Condé and the genius of Le Nôtre for design on that prodigious scale. The broad moat round the Château, winding away to the building known as "Sylvie,"<sup>3</sup> was already there, but Le Nôtre, finding the watercourse of La Nonette in the neighbourhood, diverted this to form a reservoir at the head of the Grand Canal. This supplied the Canal, the arm projecting at right angles towards the Château known as "La Manche," the water-pieces which he formed instead of parterres on either side of it, and the circular basin and fountain between the end of it and the "Grand Degré." As in all his larger designs, the main idea of Le Nôtre was very simple, what gave it its quality was its superb scale, its fine selection of details, and their adjustment to the design as a whole. On Aveline's plan of Versailles, the Canal scales 150 feet wide by a total length of 4,800 feet, exclusive

<sup>1</sup> "Chantilly," par Gustav Macon.

<sup>2</sup> See the account in Mme. de Sévigné's letter to her daughter.

<sup>3</sup> "Sylvie" was the name given by the poet Theophile de Viau to Marie Félicie des Ursins, Duchesse de Montmorenci, wife of the young Duke who was beheaded by order of Richelieu. It was for this lady that Anguier executed the sumptuous monument on the north side of the Chapel of the Lycée at Moulins. Owing to carelessness or wrong instructions Anguier designed the monument for the south side, with the result that the principal figures are looking west instead of east.



of the part beyond the bridge, which was another 2,400 feet long. In contrast to this, in the gardens to the west of the house, Le Nôtre had already introduced all sorts of ingenious details,<sup>1</sup> cascades, the grand jet d'eau, the parterres des Grenouilles, the Portique de Treillage on the Isle de Dragon, the Isle d'Amour, the Isle du Bois Vert, the Temple of Venus, the Salle de Comédie, and many other devices. All this garden and the orangery were swept away at the French Revolution, and M. Macon says the destruction was so complete that when the Prince de Condé recovered possession, the whole of it had to be levelled to form the existing "jardin anglais."<sup>2</sup> The contrast between the superabundant detail of this earlier garden and the broad and simple treatment of the water garden to the north of the house is remarkable. It is possible that the north garden already existed, and that Le Nôtre only developed it in detail, whereas the east garden and the Canal were new work designed by Le Nôtre for Condé, and represent his own mature ideas. As he advanced in knowledge of his art, his tendency was constantly towards larger design. The reason that he gave up elaborate parterres was probably not that assigned by Saint-Simon, that they were only fit for nursery maids. Le Nôtre found that his parterres, unless they were carefully kept, became shabby and untidy. There is a view by Perelle of the grand parterre of the Trianon of S. Cloud, designed by Le Nôtre for Monsieur at some time before 1681. The cost of keeping such a parterre as this in order, together with the care of the grass, the sanding of the paths, and the constant clipping of borders, hedges, and the great walls of verdure necessary for his effects, must have been so great as to become prohibitive. Saint-Simon says it was the policy of Louis XIV to encourage his courtiers to build and lay out gardens, because by so doing they impoverished themselves, and became more completely dependent on the King. The sums expended on gardens by such men as Fouquet, Bordier, Pomponne, Condé, Colbert, or Louvois, must have been enormous. Country life, in the real sense of the term, was out of

<sup>1</sup> These are shown and described in Perelle's small views of Chantilly: "Diverses Veues de Chantilly dessinez et gravées par Perelle."

<sup>2</sup> This deplorable effort was the work of the architect Dubois in 1820, but the landscape gardener had appeared at Chantilly fifty years before—about 1770. "Le Hameau et le jardin anglais qui l'entoure sortirent un beau jour de l'imagination de Louis Joseph de Bourbon dont la pensée fut hereusement rendue par son architecte Leroy" (M. Macon, "Chantilly"). Unfortunately the revolution spared the "jardin anglais," and wrecked the formal garden, under some confused idea that the latter was part of the feudal system.



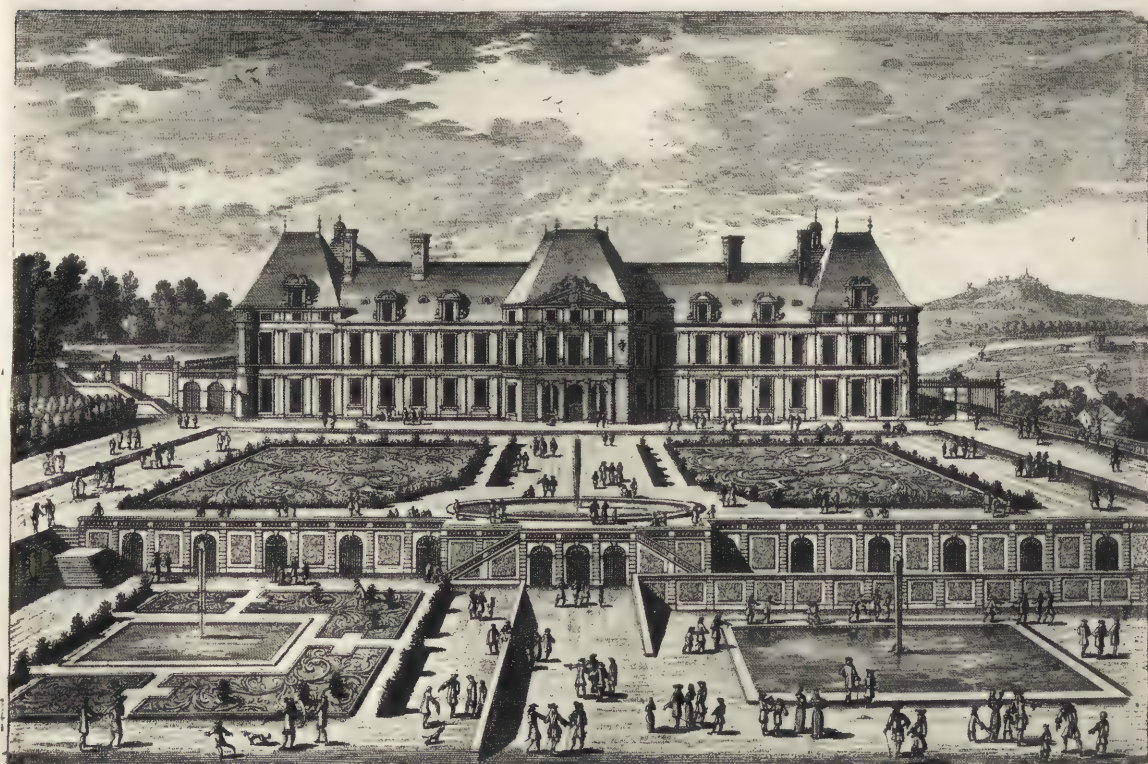


LE GRAND PARTERRE D'EAU ET LE CANAL de Chantilly.

A Paris Chez Mariette rue St. Jacques à la Victoire Avec Privilège du Roi.

[D. re' L.

CHANTILLY--THE WATER PARTERRE AND CANAL. LE NÔTRE (see pp. 175, 176)



MEUDON du côté du Jardin d'où l'on découvre une des plus belles vues du monde, a cause de sa situation élevée. M. de Louvois a fait aplanir les terres et lever des terrasses, et a presque tout fait changer la disposition du jardin sur les dessins de M. le Nôtre. La principale avenue de cette belle maison est du côté de St. Cloud, ce qui la termine agréablement.

A Paris Chez N. Langlois, rue St. Jacques à la Victoire Avec Privil.

[Perelle

MEUDON--THE GARDENS. LE NÔTRE (see p. 178)

[I. TO FACE P. 176







fashion. No nobleman lived on his estate. He drew his revenues, and went down from time to time to see that his rents were forthcoming, and his seignorial rights intact, but came back to Court at the earliest opportunity. In the Memoirs of the time one hears little of any country life such as had been sedulously fostered by Henri IV. Mme. de Sévigné wrote kindly of the machines, the *jets d'eau* and Boulingrins with which M. de Chaulnes amused himself in his gardens in Brittany, but evidently considered herself to be in the wilderness when away from Paris and the Court. People who did not attend at Court were considered outside the range of society, and the life of the majority of French noblemen and gentlemen in the time of Louis XIV was spent in dancing attendance on the King and the royal favourites, and in dragging about in pursuit of the inexpressibly wearisome journeys of the Court from Versailles to Marly or S. Germain-en-Laye, and back to Versailles.

In or about 1673 Colbert rebuilt a considerable part of Sceaux,<sup>1</sup> and Le Nôtre laid out its very extensive gardens. Sceaux was among the great houses of the time. Piganiol de la Force<sup>2</sup> describes it as "un magnifique maison. . . . La situation [on high ground], les grandes dépenses et l'art tout a concouru à sa perfection." It was begun in 1673-4, and Perrault is said to have designed the house. Le Brun decorated it, and Puget and Girardon were called in to provide the sculpture for the gardens. On either side of the "allée d'eau" was placed a row of busts on pedestals, with jets of water between each, and behind them a palisade of trellis. From this one descended to "un agréable vallon" which contained the grand water-piece, said by Piganiol to be six acres in extent, and opposite, on the slope of a hill, was the great cascade. A canal "d'une longueur extraordinaire" (not shown in Perelle's view) led out of the ground to a water-piece. As usual Le Nôtre used water for his main effect. In 1700 Sceaux came into the possession of the Duc de Maine, son of Louis XIV and Mme. de Montespan, and Sceaux became a great place of entertainment in the first half of the eighteenth century. The property was sold in 1798, and the purchaser destroyed the old house and the greater part of the grounds. The same fate overtook the house at Choisy le Roi on the Seine (10 km. south-south-east of Paris), built from the designs of the Gabriel of the time for Mme. de Montpensier<sup>3</sup> with

<sup>1</sup> About ten km. south of Paris.

<sup>2</sup> "Desc. Hist. de la Ville de Paris," ix, 454-64.

<sup>3</sup> In 1739 the property was sold to Louis XV, and a great deal was done here both



gardens by Le Nôtre. Although not so stated anywhere, it is almost certain that Le Nôtre designed the gardens at Rincy, where a great house had been built before 1650 from designs of Le Vau for Bordier, Intendant of Finance. The financiers and the great state officers kept up the tradition of the French financiers of the sixteenth century, of Berthelot, the Bohiers, Semblançay and Poncher, who had made their immense fortunes out of the necessities of the State, and spent them on the erection of sumptuous country houses. Louvois did on the high ground at Meudon what Colbert had done at Sceaux. The first house at Meudon had been built by Philibert de L'Orme for the Cardinal de Lorraine. M. Servien employed Le Vau to design large additions and alterations to the house, and had the terrace constructed at enormous expense. It then came into the hands of Louvois for whom Mansart designed the forecourt and Le Nôtre the Gardens. The description on Perelle's plate says: "M. de Louvois a fait aplanir les terres et elever des Terrasses et a presque tout fait changer la disposition du jardin sur les desseins de M. Le Nostre." The water, as usual, had to be pumped by windmills,<sup>1</sup> and was distributed in a profusion of basins, fountains, and water-pieces. There seems to have been no limit to the cost of these vast transformations. The King's example was faithfully followed by his ministers, and meanwhile the country was steadily being impoverished. Blondel, fifty years later, lamented the decadence of garden design, but the grand manner of Le Nôtre fell to pieces owing to its sheer impracticability, almost as much as to the fashionable cult of nature in the eighteenth century.

Le Nôtre died in 1700 at the age of eighty-seven. Considering his great reputation it is surprising how little is really known of him. In 1679 he went to Italy on one of those combined missions so dear to the economical mind of Colbert. In a letter to the Duc d'Estrées, Ambassador at Rome, Colbert informed him that Le Nôtre was coming to Rome "non pas tant pour sa curiosité que pour rechercher avec soin s'il trouvera quelque chose assez beau pour meriter d'être

in the house and gardens. Piganiol de la Force (ix, 137), says that they were very rich in sculpture, particularly in copies of the antique made by Anguier for Fouquet, and he also notes some remarkable discoveries of Roman tombs made here in 1748 and 1751 on which the Comte de Caylus, the fashionable amateur of the time, was eloquent.

<sup>1</sup> "Desc. Hist. de Paris," ix, 280-286. When Piganiol de la Force wrote there were two houses at Meudon, the old one already referred to and the "Château neuf" erected on the site of the famous grotto. After the death of Louvois, Louis XIV bought Meudon and presented it to the Dauphin. Later engravings show this "Château neuf" with parterres of impossible intricacy.

imité dans les maisons Royales, ou pour lui fournir de nouvelles pensées sur les beaux dessins qu'il invente tous les jours pour la satisfaction et le plaisir de S. M." D'Estrées was desired to obtain for Le Nôtre introductions to all the best houses and palaces in the environs of Rome, and as Le Nôtre travelled in the company of Mme. la Duchesse Sforza, he was received by everybody on his arrival at Rome in July. Le Nôtre was a simple-minded and ingenuous man. "Il avait une naïveté<sup>1</sup> et une vérité charmante." At an audience with the Pope instead of making the usual obeisance, Le Nôtre rushed forward, kissed the Pope on both cheeks and exclaimed: "Eh, bon jour, mon révérend père, et que vous avez bon usage, et que je suis aise de vous voir en si bonne Santé." The Pope burst out laughing, and held Le Nôtre in the highest esteem ever afterwards. Saint-Simon says that Le Nôtre was lent to the Pope, but he was also commissioned by Colbert to see how Bernini was getting on with the equestrian statue of Louis XIV, which was never completed, and to report on the French Academy. Errard, the Director, was instructed to acquaint him with all that was being done in the school, and to follow his advice in all that regarded the Academy. "Vous connoissez son mérite."<sup>2</sup> In September Colbert wrote again to Errard expressing his satisfaction that Le Nôtre had found "quelque chose de beau à Rome et digne des ornemens des maisons royales." The Orangery at Versailles was one of the results of the few months' visit to Rome.

No further incidents are told of his career. He was a member of the Academy of Architecture and signed the Minutes for the first time in August 1681,<sup>3</sup> when the question of the use of the colossal order was discussed, and the Academy unanimously resolved "qu'il est beaucoup mieux de mettre autant de colonnes ou pilasters qu'il y a d'estages." Le Nôtre appears to have found the proceedings so dull that he never attended again. Blondel<sup>4</sup> mentions that he was singularly uncommunicative in regard to his art, and that he seldom praised the work of others. Though usually very amiable, he allowed himself on two occasions to describe Mansart as "un maçon." Unlike most of his contemporaries, the happy and equable temperament of Le Nôtre was never distracted by ambition, nor indeed was there any reason that it should, for throughout the whole course of his career, he had magnificent

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon, who tells the story, says the Pope was Clement X (Altieri), but the reigning Pope in 1679 was an Odescalchi, Innocent XI.

<sup>2</sup> Colbert to Errard.

<sup>3</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," i, 320.

<sup>4</sup> Blondel, "Arch. Franc.," i, 45, and "Cours d'Architecture," vi, 70.



opportunities of realizing his great abilities as a designer, and it probably did not trouble him in the least that he was easily beaten in successful intrigue by Jules Hardouin Mansart. He won and preserved the affectionate regard of two such very different persons as Louis XIV and the Duc de Saint-Simon.<sup>1</sup> The King held him in the highest esteem, made him a Chevalier of the Order of S. Michael, and to the very end treated him with a consideration which says a great deal not only for Le Nôtre, but also for the King. Saint-Simon had the highest regard both for the man and for his work. What Le Nôtre did, he says, was far above anything done since his time, though he was most sedulously imitated. Indeed, within a few years of his death, his methods were reduced to a system and embodied in the famous "*Théorie et Pratique du jardinage*."<sup>2</sup> Able as that book is, it yet bears out Saint-Simon's criticism. The imitators of Le Nôtre did not possess his eye for ground and his resource; they lost touch of his superb sense of scale, they relied on ingenuity of detail, till the whole thing became so tedious that it fell an easy prey to the landscape-garden designers in the eighteenth century. But it was not only to his genius as a designer that Le Nôtre owed his great reputation. Saint-Simon for once in a way praises without reserve: "Le Nôtre avait une probité, une exactitude et une droiture qui le faisaient estimer et aimer de tout le monde; jamais il ne sortit de son état, ni ne se méconnut et fut toujours parfaitement desintéressé." He was perhaps the one man at the Court of Louis XIV who really deserved this praise.

<sup>1</sup> See Saint-Simon, ed. E. de la Bedollière, ii, 452, for the stories of the King and Le Nôtre in the gardens of Versailles.

<sup>2</sup> Written by Dezallier D'Argenville, the elder, from notes by Le Blond, who also supplied the illustrations; see chapter xxiii.

## CHAPTER XIII

### JULES HARDOUIN MANSART

JULES HARDOUIN MANSART was, perhaps, the most successful architect that has ever lived. Others, such as Wren, have had equal opportunities, but no other architect has enjoyed such uniform good fortune. His career was one of astonishing and uninterrupted prosperity, down to the very day of his death. Whether he won this success on his merits, whether he was really a great architect, and deserved the reputation that he enjoyed in his lifetime, is another question, the answer to which is to be looked for in the record of his life, and in the buildings attributed to his designs; but even then we are not at the end of the matter. There remains the obstinate doubt as to who helped, who was really the man who designed these world-famous buildings. Did Mansart himself design them, or was there, as Saint-Simon says, quite plainly, some "architecte sous clef," whose identity was sedulously concealed? The evidence, though very suggestive of the truth of Saint-Simon's statement, is not absolutely conclusive. On any showing, Jean Hardouin Mansart must have possessed considerable ability of some sort. He was not born in the purple. The great architect, to whom he was distantly related, was out of favour. Yet at an early age he managed to push his way to the front, and made for himself and maintained a position at the Court of Louis XIV without parallel in the history of the architects of any country, ancient or modern. Contemporary success, however, is no criterion of an artist's genius, and the question of Mansart's real place in art is worth sifting carefully, not only because Mansart was at least a very considerable figure in his time, but also because his career is typical of the fortunes of those architects who, whatever their merits, have owed their success to other qualities than those of the artist.



Jules Hardouin Mansart was born in 1645. His real name was Hardouin, and on his mother's side he was grand-nephew of François Mansart. His father, Raphael Hardouin, "premier peintre du Cabinet du Roi," had married Marie Gaultier, niece of François Mansart, so that his connection with the latter was not really close. Saint-Simon, who regarded Jules Hardouin with a dislike and contempt pretty equally balanced, says of him, that "D'abord tambour, puis tailleur de pierre apprenti maçon," he wormed his way into an intimacy with the great Mansart, "qui a laissé une si grande reputation parmi les architectes," and that it was François Mansart who got him employment on the royal buildings, and endeavoured to make him an architect. "On le soupçonna d'être son bâtard"—Jules Hardouin called himself his nephew—and on the death of François Mansart in 1666, he took on the name of Mansart, "pour se faire connaître et se donner du relief." By degrees, says Saint-Simon, he managed to attract the attention of the King, "et profita si bien de sa familiarité passée des seigneurs aux valets et aux maçons," that the King attributed to him the ability of his great uncle, and ultimately promoted him to one of the highest offices in the State. According to another account, Jules Hardouin is said to have worked under Liberal Bruand at the Hôtel de Vendôme, and it is not really known how he first established his footing in the Court, and how it was that when quite a young man he should have been entrusted with the design of Clagny for Mme. de Montespan<sup>1</sup> in preference to Antoine Le Pautre, and all the members of the Academy of Architecture. Mariette's account, repeated by Dezallier D'Argenville, is that Colbert first called in Antoine Le Pautre to design Clagny for Mme. de Montespan, and, being of a frugal mind, had instructed him to prepare a very plain design. Le Pautre, "suivant les intentions du ministre, n'avoit point donné l'essor a son génie," and Mme. de Montespan, a lady of violent temper, expressed her disgust with her usual freedom. Le Nôtre,<sup>2</sup> who was present, and anxious to help young Mansart, suggested his name, and he was then and there entrusted with the design. Le Pautre was so disgusted that he nearly died of chagrin, and it meant, in fact, the end of his career.

<sup>1</sup> In Perelle's view of Clagny, made in 1679, the date is given as 1674. Clagny was about 1,200 yards north-east of the forecourt of Versailles. Later on S. Cyr was built for Mme. de Maintenon in the opposite direction, about a mile and a half to the south-west of Versailles.

<sup>2</sup> "Il proposa adroitement à la maitresse du roi de lui faire par un jeune homme de sa connoissance des dessins qui lui plairoient; elle y consentit, et ils furent faits présentés, agréés" (Mariette Abecedario, "Antoine Le Pautre").

Mansart now had his foot on the ladder, and he was not the man to lose any chance of climbing higher. In 1675 he was forcibly imported into the Academy by Colbert, and the Academicians, whatever they may have felt, were in no position to resist the patronage of that despotic Minister. Moreover, Mansart was a young man of agreeable presence and plausible address, and by consulting the Academy, deferring to their opinion, and generally playing up to them till he felt sure of his position, he very soon established himself firmly in that exclusive circle. What was of much more importance, however, to Mansart was that at Clagny he was brought into direct touch with Louis XIV, and so impressed him with his ability, that in 1676 the King entrusted him with the vast undertaking of Versailles, though Mansart was barely thirty, and so far had only begun one considerable building—for Clagny was not finished till 1678-9. Clagny was much admired at the time. Daviler a few years later described it as “une des plus régulières maisons Royales.” Fifty years later Piganiol de la Force<sup>1</sup> still said that it was perhaps “la maison la plus régulièrement belle qu’il y ait en Europe.” It was destroyed soon after 1769, and it is now only possible to form an idea of it from the engravings of Perelle and the folio volume of the plans and elevations of Clagny, published by Michael Hardouin,<sup>2</sup> the contractor in 1680. As shown in these engravings, the design does not suggest any remarkable ability. It was dull and commonplace, lacking in originality, refinement, and any sense of composition such as Le Vau had aimed at in his rather clumsy way. The King had little critical sense; and Mme. de Montespan, brilliant as she was, regarded the whole thing with the lordly ignorance of a grand lady. Plenty of ornament, good or bad, was quite enough for her.

The commission of Versailles was momentous in more ways than

<sup>1</sup> “Desc. Hist.,” ix, 141.

<sup>2</sup> “Livre de tous les plans, profils, et elevations tant en perspective que géométrale du chateau de Clagny, du dessein du Sieur Mansart, Architecte du Roi, et mis en œuvre par Michel Hardouin, l’un des entrepreneurs des Bastimens de S.M. et dudit Clagny.” Paris, 1680, folio. The plan is crude and inconvenient, and a detail which is given of the construction of the roof unsound. The engravings show the extent of J. H. Mansart’s capacity when left to his own devices, and the impression they leave is not favourable. Michel Hardouin, mason, received a large payment on account of Clagny in 1679 in association with Gabriel and others. With Simon Pipault he contracted for the masonry of the new Church of the Invalides in 1680 (“Comptes,” i, 1187, 1323-1368). In 1684 another Hardouin appears in the “Comptes” as a controller-general “des Bastimens,” at a salary of 3,000, and afterwards of 4,000, livres per annum. Both of these men must have been related to Mansart, and the family connection must have been extremely strong.



one. It meant the end of the old regime and the definite inauguration of the new. Colbert had failed in his effort to keep the Court at Paris, the works at the Louvre were abandoned, Claude Perrault, the successful favourite, who had carried everything before him ten years before, was forgotten; the Academicians were more or less ignored. Henceforward Mansart and his clique were to have it all their own way, and that fine independence which had distinguished the architecture of Lemercier and François Mansart was now to disappear from French architecture, finally vanquished by officialism<sup>1</sup> on the one hand, and the irresistible tyranny of Court fashion on the other. Not the least disastrous of the mistakes of Louis XIV was his wholehearted acceptance of this clever adventurer who, as an artist, lacked both scholarship and conviction, and, as a man, was destitute of any sense of chivalry and honour. In the period from 1676 till 1689-90 money was poured out like water on the Royal Houses and gardens. Mansart had only to flatter the King's vanity, and he got what he liked. Mansart's first appearance in the "Comptes" was in 1676, when he receives 500 francs, the regular salary of the officers "qui ont gages." But in February, 1677, he received 6,050 francs in consideration "des soins et de la conduite qu'il a des bastimens de Sa Majesté," and on 17 March of the same year a further sum of 6,000 francs for his design and superintendence of Clagny. In 1678 he received 4,000 francs for his care of the Royal buildings, together with 6,000 francs "pour ses appointements," and from this date onwards the payments constantly increase both in frequency and amount. In 1681 he is granted 20,000 francs to build himself a house at Versailles, together with 6,000 francs salary and 2,000 francs "gratification extraordinaire," the latter rising to 15,000 francs in 1683, and to enormous sums in the latter years of his life.

The building of Versailles, the formation of its gardens out of a wilderness, and the design and building of the Trianon, Marly, and other royal extravagances, formed a perennial source of interest and amusement to Louis XIV. He had an almost childish passion for building, and for seeing buildings grow under his own eye. Saint-Simon says, "Il s'amusoit fort à ses bâtimens. Il avoit aussi le compas dans l'œil pour la justesse, les proportions, la symmetrie, mais le goût n'y répondoit pas." He appears to have been a man of exasperating

<sup>1</sup> The last word in architecture always rested with the *Surintendant des Bâtimens*, who, generally speaking, combined in his own person the power and functions of a Minister of Fine Arts and a First Commissioner of Works.







*Chateau de Clagny d Versailles en orée doiseau avec ses avenues du côté de l'entrée*

*Perelle fecit 1819*

*[Perelle]*

CLAGNY — ENTRANCE FRONT. J. H. MANSART (see p. 182)

*L. Maréchal del. et sculp.*















*Vue et Perspective du Château de Versailles, et de la*  
Dedée

*Peint et Gravé d'après la Nature par P. Moreau.*

*Par son très humble très obéissant*

GENERAL VIEW OF VERSAILLES FROM S.E.





*petite Ecurie du vieux Versailles, du côté du Parc au Cerf.*  
**AU ROY.**

*et ses fâcheux serviteurs et sujets P. Menant.*

*Je vendrai Paris chez Danton pour le D. D. D. C. P. R.*

AWN AND ENGRAVED BY P. MENANT, 1714





accuracy in minor details. His natural taste was florid, even coarse, and owing to Mazarin's neglect of his education, nothing had been done to improve it. The academic refinements of Perrault made no appeal to him. What he wanted was a robust, aggressive, full-blooded vulgarian. He found his man in J. H. Mansart, and having once broken loose from the restraint of Colbert, the two ran riot unrestrained at Versailles.

The original building at Versailles was merely a hunting-box of Louis XIII, quite a small and rather charming house of brick and stone in the old country-house manner of Henri IV. It was built most probably about 1624, and designed by an otherwise unknown man, Le Roy.<sup>1</sup> Louis XIII was a keen sportsman and a man of modest tastes, and the old château was built merely to house the King and his suite for a night or two on his hunting expeditions. Saint-Simon contemptuously calls it "ce petit château de cartes que Louis XIII y avoit fait pour n'y plus coucher sur la paille." His son, Louis XIV, was inspired by the splendours of Vaux le Vicomte with a burning desire to have a country-house of his own invention.<sup>2</sup> He already had Chambord, Fontainebleau, Villers-Cotterets, and Blois, but their associations belonged to other times, and they were the work of other hands, and Colbert, not yet sufficiently sure of his place to insist on his own views, felt himself compelled to humour the King's fancy, and work was actually begun at Versailles in 1661, under Louis Le Vau. The forecourt was enlarged by two long wings extending outwards from the original house, for it is to be noted that throughout all the transformations of Versailles, Louis XIV, from a feeling of filial loyalty, insisted on preserving the original house of his father, as shown in Patel's view (1667).<sup>3</sup> This still formed the main corps de Logis, with wings on either side of what is now the "Cour de Marbre," and a grille on the fourth side opposite the house. Outside and in front of this was the forecourt proper, formed by ranges of buildings on either side, set back behind the end pavilions of the "Cour de Marbre." The forecourt was entered through a gate and grille, flanked by two detached pavilions, and the entrance was reached by a rising way with semicircular ramps on either side terminating in obelisks. Three

<sup>1</sup> "Revue de Paris," 15th April, 1905, L. Battifol.

<sup>2</sup> It seems also that he never really trusted Paris. "Ne lui pardonnant pas les injures d'autrefois, les barricades et la fuite nocturne de janvier 1649" ("Hist. de France," ed. Lavis, viii, 1, 457).

<sup>3</sup> Now in the Musée de Versailles.



avenues laid out on a "patte d'oie" plan radiated outwards from this entrance.

In 1668 the King already found this too small for his purpose; a competition was held for the enlargement of the palace, and the plans of Louis Le Vau were again adopted.<sup>1</sup> The moats were filled in, the arcades and grilles removed, and the old house cased in with new buildings, except on the side facing to the "Cour de Marbre," and the façade facing the gardens between two new pavilions. Here Le Vau formed a large terrace overlooking the gardens, which was afterwards covered in by Mansart with the Galerie des Glaces. The forecourt was increased in size and pavilions built at the four corners, the spaces between being afterwards filled up by Mansart with ranges of buildings. The new buildings were elaborately decorated under the direction of Le Brun, and meanwhile the gardens were steadily proceeding under Le Nôtre. The view of Versailles from the gardens by Perelle show the palace as left by Le Vau, without the north and south wings, and with the set back on the first floor between the pavilions afterwards filled in by Mansart.<sup>2</sup>

Such was the position when Mansart was called in in 1676, and the third phase of Versailles began. The King had throughout taken the minutest personal interest in every detail, and Mansart's method was simple but ingenious. "Son adresse était d'engager le Roi par des riens en apparence en des entreprises fortes ou longues et de lui montrer des plans imparfaits, surtout pour ses jardins, qui tout seuls lui missent le doigt sur la lettre. Alors Mansart s'écriait qu'il n'aurait jamais trouvé ce que le Roi proposait; il éclatait en admiration, protestant qu'aupres de lui il n'était qu'un écolier, et le faisait tomber de la sorte ou il voulait sans que le Roi s'en doûtât le moins du monde."<sup>3</sup> By means of this systematic flattery of which the King was insatiable

<sup>1</sup> E. Cazes, "Le Château de Versailles," p. 18. M. Cazes says Jacques Gabriel, A. Le Pautre, Claude Perrault, Vigarani, and Louis Le Vau took part in this competition; but Jacques Gabriel was a mason, and in 1668 was paid 21,000 francs for masonry at Versailles. There is no reference to this competition in the memoirs of Charles Perrault, and the only Vigarani referred to in the "Comptes" is a certain Carlo Vigarani who supplied decorations for a theatre in 1664, and did certain repairs with Lulli to the Salle des Comédies at the Palais Royal in 1674 ("Comptes," 51, 81, 746, 913).

<sup>2</sup> It appears from this view that the windows on the first floor as left by Le Vau were square-headed with Doric pilasters between. Mansart altered this to semicircular heads with an Ionic order.

<sup>3</sup> Saint-Simon. Elsewhere Saint-Simon says of Mansart: "Il avoit l'art d'apporter au roi des plans informes, mais qui lui mettoient le doigt sur la lettre, a quoi ce délié maçon l'aideroit imperceptiblement."



*Vue et perspective du Chateau de Versailles, du côté de l'entrée*

VERSAILLES IN 1664. DRAWN AND ENGRAVED BY ISRAEL SILVESTRE (see p. 185)  
 ("CABINET DU ROI," VOL. XI, PL. 4)



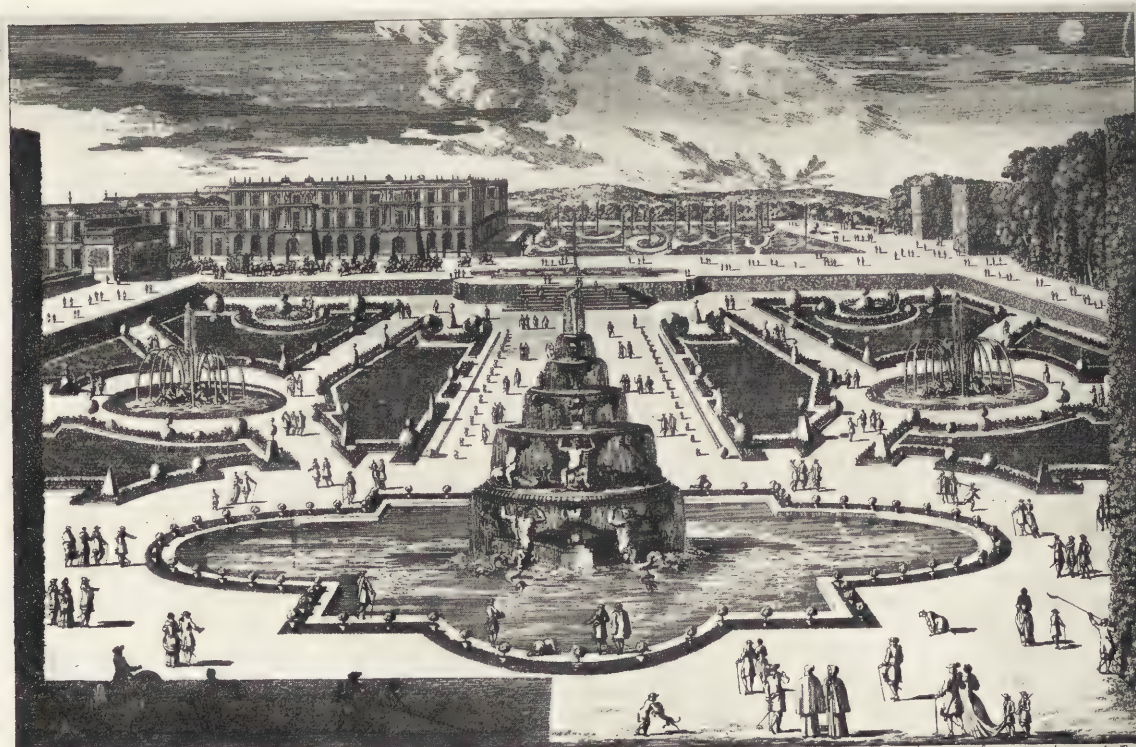


Fait par Perelle

*Vue du Chateau de Versailles du côté du Parterre d'Eau*

A Paris Chez L. Mariette, rue d' Jacques a la Victoire. Avec Privilège du Roy.

VERSAILLES. GARDEN FRONT AS LEFT BY LE VAU BEFORE MANSART'S ALTERATIONS (see p. 186)



LA FONTAINE DE LA PYRAMIDE, dans le grand parterre de l'avenue à Versailles est composée de 4 bassins l'un sur l'autre, dont le premier est soutenu par de grands Tritons, le 2<sup>e</sup> par le même Triton, le 3<sup>e</sup> par 4 Dauphins, et le 4<sup>e</sup> par 4 Eserenias; au-dessus est en vase d'où sort un jet d'eau. Aux deux côtés de cette Fontaine sont 2 bassins ronds surmontés de colonnes soutenus par des Tritons et des Sirenes; le tout est de bronze d'or. La Fontaine au du d' Girardon et les deux Bassins sont faits par les s<sup>rs</sup> Boppe, Thibault et le Royeur. 1700 par No. 11.

A Paris Chez L. Mariette, rue d' Jacques a la Victoire. Avec Privilège du Roy.

[Perelle

VERSAILLES. THE NORTH SIDE BEFORE MANSART'S ALTERATIONS (see p. 186)





*L'Entrée du Château de Versailles*  
*A Paris Chez L. Mariette rue St Jacques a la Victoire avec Privilège du Roy*

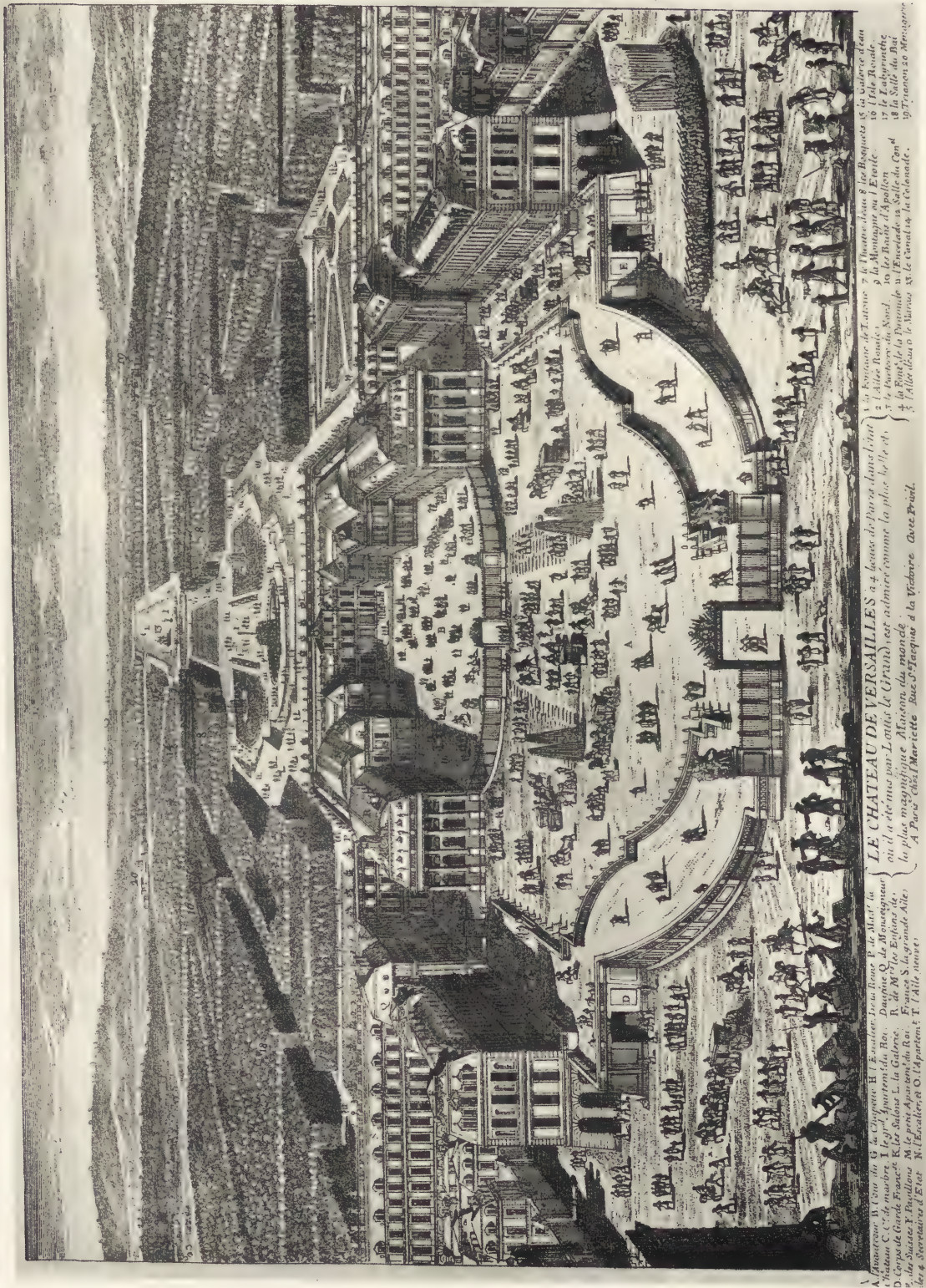
VERSAILLES. ENTRANCE FRONT AS LEFT BY LE VAU (see p. 186)



*Vue du Château de Versailles du côté du Jardin.*

VERSAILLES. GARDEN FRONT AS ALTERED BY J. H. MANSART (see p. 188)





[Perelle

VERSAILLES. THE ENTRANCE FRONT AS ALTERED BY J. H. MANSART (see p. 188)



and his architect a past-master, Mansart seems to have gradually got into his own hands the whole control of the palace. Nor was he deterred by a sense of chivalry from taking advantage of an opening at the expense of his friends and colleagues. Saint-Simon says that when Le Nôtre was absent in Italy, Mansart seized the opportunity to design and carry out the "Colonnade" in the gardens, an inartistic and meaningless design, but of great cost in execution.<sup>1</sup> The Gardens were then in the hands of Le Nôtre. Mansart's action was nothing less than an unscrupulous trespass on another man's province. When the King asked Le Nôtre what he thought of it, the latter contented himself with replying, "you have turned a mason into a gardener, and he has given you a piece of his trade." The secret of Mansart's success was his single eye for the main chance. I have already described his desertion of La Teulière in the matter of the Directorship of the Academy of Rome. La Teulière became inconvenient, so he was quietly dropped. Le Nôtre was away in Italy, the path was thus open for Mansart's personal advancement, and he took it without hesitation. With an employer of greater insight than the King, or with a staff of assistants less competent than that which Mansart had at his disposal, Mansart must have failed ignominiously. What carried him through was his own adroitness, the King's thirst for flattery, and the inimitable craftsmanship of the French artists collected at Versailles. It is the skill of these men, of Tuby, Le Hongre, Coysevox, Gaspar Marsy, Slodtz, Girardon, Regnaudin, and Jouvenet, the sculptors, Danglebert and Dionis, joiners, of Pierre Marie, the smith, of Pierre Le Maistre, contractor, of Gabriel and André Mazière, masons, and of innumerable other workmen, that gives its undying distinction to Versailles. Its architecture is its weakest point, for the general idea of Mansart's design is bald and monotonous, and were it not for the Orangery which stands by itself, and in a much less degree the interior of the Chapel, there would be little to admire in the architecture of Versailles. But though the King was recklessly extravagant, there was this at least to be said for his enterprise at Versailles, that it was an unrivalled school and opportunity for the artists and craftsmen of France. From this point of view Louis XIV did at Versailles on a far more extensive scale what François I had done at Fontainebleau 150 years before. Versailles established a definite standard of excellence in workmanship which the French have never since lost, and it realized

<sup>1</sup> See, however, note, p. 173. Saint-Simon was very careless as to dates.



part at least of Colbert's policy of making France supreme in the arts and industries in the western world. As for Mansart, whatever his moral and artistic defects, he certainly possessed immense energy and power of organization. He had formidable people to deal with; first Colbert, suspicious, hard and masterful; then Louvois, whose arbitrary temper often betrayed him into brutality, both of them men of great ability, and always the King, a person on whose action it was almost impossible to calculate. With such powerful forces to manage, to say nothing of the Ladies of the Court, Mansart could have had little time for design. He had to get together his staff in which, as we shall see, he was singularly successful, and he, or somebody, had to superintend the labours of innumerable workmen.<sup>1</sup> In the latter part of his duties he was, no doubt, very greatly helped by the officers of the Royal building staff, and I fancy that the responsibility for most of the construction lay with the great contractors, Gabriel, Hardouin and others. As to his own drawing D'Argenville says "il dessinait grossièrement avec un chardon ou une grosse plume," and left "les figures de ses dessins" to his assistants and pupils. The remark is suggestive of the familiar practice of the commercial traveller who collects orders for others to carry out, and the history of Mansart's career leads inevitably to the conclusion that this was, in fact, his usual practice.

Mansart lost no time in the work of transforming Versailles. In the Cour du Marbre he reconstructed the roof and introduced the dormers with their elaborate leadwork and a profusion of ornament never contemplated in the original design of Louis XIII. By 1680, he had completed the *Cour Royale* (the forecourt), and built the stables opposite the entrance of the palace. The work on the garden front was begun in 1678. Here he did away with Le Vau's terrace on the First Floor, and formed in its place the Galerie des Glaces which was completed in 1684. The south wing was begun in 1682; the north in 1684, giving a total length of the façade on the garden front of 1,935 feet, with 375 windows.<sup>2</sup> In the eighteenth century all sorts of legends were in circulation as to the cost of Versailles, and in the year III of the Revolution children were taught that Versailles had cost 1,400 millions of francs and that Louis XIV had burnt the accounts. The accounts, however, which were preserved and published for the first time in 1881, show that the total cost of Versailles, the

<sup>1</sup> D'Argenville says that at S. Cyr 2,800 men were employed on the building in the year 1685-6 ("Vies," i, 359).

<sup>2</sup> E. Cazes, "Le Château de Versailles," p. 25.

Trianon, Clagny, and the parish church of Versailles, 1664-1715, was 64,580,565 livres, 14 sous, 6 deniers; of Marly 11,686,969 livres, 5 sous, 5 deniers; of the Machine de Marly 4,611,918 livres, 18 sous, 5 deniers; and of the aqueduct of Maintenon 8,983,627 livres, 12 sous, 9 deniers. Total 89,863,081 livres, 11 sous, 1 denier. I suggest that the buying value of a franc of Louis XIV should be multiplied by four to five, which would bring out a nett total of somewhere about 15 million pounds.<sup>1</sup> There is much exquisite detail at Versailles, and it must always be a monument of extraordinary historical interest. But was it worth the ten or twelve million pounds that it cost? Its maintenance became intolerably burdensome to the State. Its royal owners of later generations were bored with it, and after various degrading vicissitudes it has ended up as a Museum. As a work of art, Versailles, in spite of its enormous effort, is unconvincing, and indeed a gigantic failure. Its enterprise was due to a caprice of the King, who aspired to transform an unhealthy and uninteresting tract of country into a combination of Paradise and Olympus, in spite of the fact that there was no adequate water supply, and scarcely a single natural feature of any value to start with: "Versailles, le plus triste et le plus ingrat de tous les lieux, sans vue, sans bois, sans eau, sans terre, parceque tout y est sable mouvant ou marécage."<sup>2</sup>

The King, except in the case of Le Nôtre, was badly advised, and he made matters worse by his constant interference in detail. In spite of its size, the Salle des Glaces and its antechamber are the only two great rooms in the palace, and Saint-Simon, who indeed must have been more acid than usual when he wrote of Versailles, complained that there was no "salle de comédie,"<sup>3</sup> "ni salle de banquets ni de bal"; that the chapel was far too high and gave the impression of an immense catafalque, and that seen from the gardens the palace looked as if it had been burnt out owing to the fact that no roofs showed their skyline anywhere, a curious instance of conservatism in taste. An entry in the accounts in 1685<sup>4</sup> shows that the chimneys smoked, and the planning is extraordinarily bad, both from a practical point of view and in regard to the architectural effect. In detail the workmanship throughout is superb. So far as craftsmanship is concerned, I doubt if there is to be found anywhere in the western world more consummate workmanship than the details of the interior of the Chapel. But

<sup>1</sup> Calculated at pre-war rates. See Introduction, p. xix.

<sup>3</sup> The Salle de l'Opéra was not begun till 1753.

<sup>2</sup> Saint-Simon.

<sup>4</sup> "Comptes," ii, 330.



the failure was in the higher control, it became worse as Mansart became supreme, and there is a marked difference between the earlier and the later periods of the internal decoration of the palace. In Colbert's time, the whole invention and control of the decorations were in the hands of Charles Le Brun, and the work that was done under his direction, first with Le Vau and afterwards with Mansart, was finer, more virile and dignified than anything done by Mansart himself, or by Mansart working with Mignard. Colbert died in 1683, and Louvois who succeeded him at once replaced Le Brun<sup>1</sup> by Mignard the painter. The effect was immediately apparent at Versailles. Le Brun, in spite of his florid and exuberant manner was a really great decorator, with a fine sense of scale, and a rare power of thinking out his scheme as a whole in form and colour, and of pulling together the different arts employed. Mignard was probably a better painter, but he lacked this sense, and Mansart was the last person to supply it. The new motives that he introduced were trifling, if not actually vulgar, and about what one would expect from a trade decorator. A comparison of the treatment of the Ionic order and entablature in the Salon de Venus as handled by Le Brun and Le Vau, and the same order as handled by Mansart on the landing of the Escalier de La Reine, shows the extent of the decadence under Mansart. His architecture throughout is frigid, monotonous and uninspired, and there is no getting away from Saint-Simon's grim verdict: "La main d'œuvre y est exquise en tout genres, l'ordonnance nulle." Excepting always the Orangery, in the whole of this vast building there is nothing that takes hold of the imagination, nothing that shows a sense of great monumental architecture.

<sup>1</sup> 1684. "Au Sr. Le Brun . . . partant cy néant" ("Comptes," ii, 566).

## CHAPTER XIV

### JULES HARDOUIN MANSART

THE Orangery is the one outstanding architectural feature of Versailles, the great exception to the general commonplace of its design. Blondel considered it a masterpiece. D'Argenville wrote of it: "L'orangerie de Versailles est un des chef d'œuvres de notre architecture. . . . Tout y est noble grand et mâle, quoique extrêmement simple, et c'est sans doute cette simplicité qui en fait le mérite." If there is one great quality more than another that is missing in the palace itself it is simplicity, and the question forces itself on the student: How is it possible to attribute to the same mind in the same place and at the same time the tiresome repetitions of the palace, and the titanic conception of the Orangery, its noble scale, and its contempt for irrelevant detail? An artist may advance from small things to great, but he cannot all of a sudden turn an intellectual somersault, and produce simultaneously buildings which are at the opposite poles of design. The Orangery at Versailles is a great example of the true Roman manner. The designer had caught more than a glimpse of the standpoint of the man who designed the Imperial Thermae. His mind was set on other things than exercises in the orders, and the fripperies, however admirably executed, which were good enough for the architect of the palace. The account given by D'Argenville in his "Life of Mansart" is that Louis XIV asked Le Nôtre to design the Orangery, but Le Nôtre, being a modest man, declined. He made a sketch, however, which pleased the King so much that Mansart was instructed to carry it out. But a sketch is quite another thing than a working drawing, and there is no evidence elsewhere that Mansart himself possessed the sense of scale and proportion, the feeling for



Roman classic and the restraint in its use necessary to design and carry through such a building as the Orangery of Versailles. I suggest another explanation.

The new Orangery was begun in 1678<sup>1</sup> but beyond extensive excavations little seems to have been done, and the actual building was not begun till six years later. Meanwhile Le Nôtre had paid a visit to Italy, and Desgodetz, an extremely skilful young draughtsman, who had been employed in making drawings of the Royal buildings,<sup>2</sup> had spent a year and a half in drawing and measuring exactly the principal buildings of ancient Rome, and had published the results of his labours in a folio of beautiful engravings brought out at the Royal charges in 1682 and dedicated to Colbert—a work which to this day remains one of the most scholarly collections of measured drawings ever published. Desgodetz was granted 2,000 francs<sup>3</sup> in August 1682, and in November of the same year 1,000 francs “sur les desseins qu’il a fait des bastimens de Versailles.” He had already (1680) been placed in charge of Chambord, and the payment of 1,000 francs was greatly in excess of payments previously made to Desgodetz for his work as a draughtsman, and I suspect that these grants were in consideration of other work than drawings of existing buildings, and were really made for the working drawings of the new Orangery. The internal evidence of the designs of the Orangery shows that it was inspired by the great public buildings of the Roman Empire, such as the vaults and corridors of its *Thermae* and amphitheatres. Desgodetz was fresh from the intimate study of these buildings. He had only a year or two before drawn and measured carefully the *thermae* of Diocletian, the amphitheatre of Verona, and the Colosseum. Now Mansart was no scholar or student. He had never seen the great buildings of Rome, and his works elsewhere show no trace of his having studied them. Indeed, it was claimed for him by his admirers that he produced almost entirely through the fertility of his natural genius. On the other hand, he had an extremely shrewd eye for a good man, and was skilful in covering up his tracks. Although the

<sup>1</sup> In October of that year Boursault and Bonnissant receive 10,200 francs for cartage and excavation at “la nouvelle orangerie” (“Comptes,” i, 1058).

<sup>2</sup> “Comptes,” i, 1109. “. . . a Desgodetz dessignateur pour plusieurs desseins et plants des maisons royales, 200 fr.” This was in 1678. See also “Comptes,” i, 1228 (anno 1680).

<sup>3</sup> “Comptes,” ii, 245: “1682, 1 Août, Au Sr. Desgodetz en consideration du livre d’architecture des antiquitez de Rome qu’il a donné au public, 2,000 ff.” 1 November, “A luy sur les desseins qu’il a fait des bastimens de Versailles, 1,000 fr.”



*A Paris chez L. Moitte, vis-à-vis l'Académie de la Vérité. Avec Privilege du Roy.*

[Perelle

VERSAILLES--THE COLONNADE. J. H. MANSART (see p. 187)





*Vue et Perspective du Château de  
Versailles*

*Dessiné et Gravé d'après le Naturel par P. Marot.*

*Par son très humble très obéissant et*

VERSAILLES IN 1714. VIEW FROM THE SOUTH-EAST



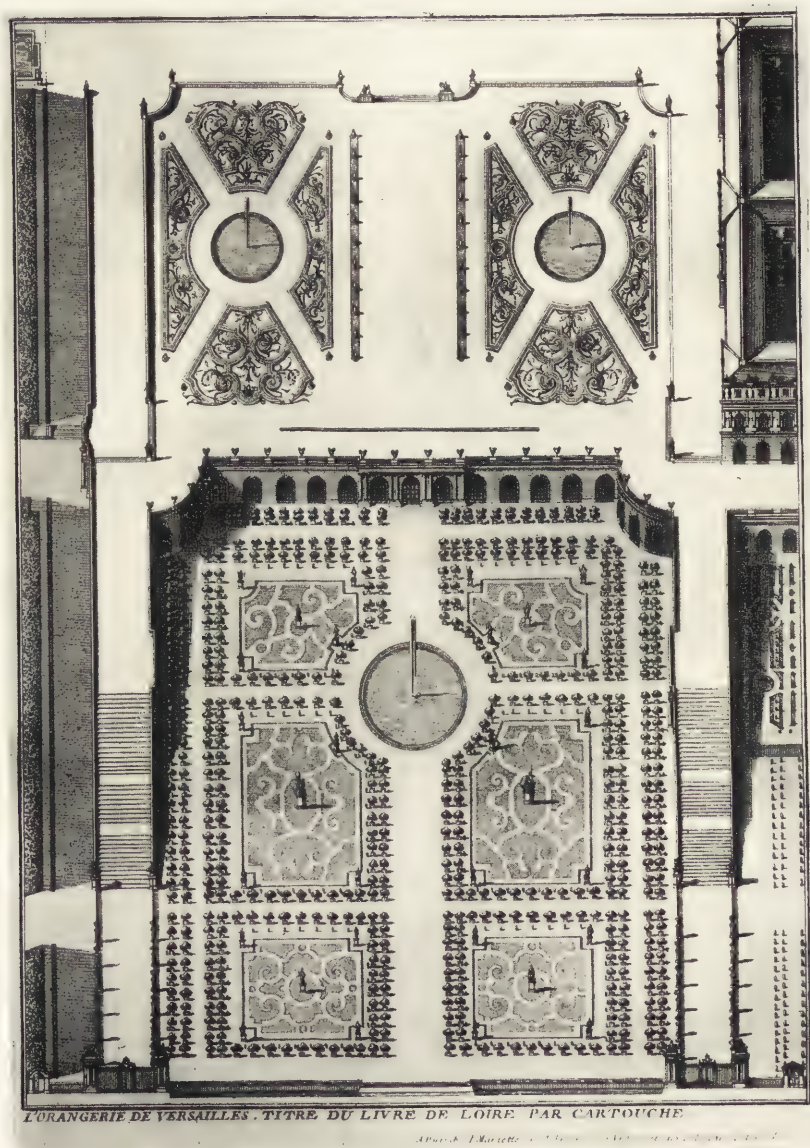


*Versailles du côté de l'Orangerie.*  
**AU ROY.**  
*un fidèle serviteur et sujet P. Menant.*

*Se vend à Paris chez le Demourant pour H. Dams G.P.R.*

VIEWING THE ORANGERY. BY P. MENANT (see p. 192)





VERSAILLES—THE ORANGERY. PLAN AND ISOMETRICAL VIEW (see p. 192)

evidence is only internal I incline to the conclusion that he may have availed himself of the knowledge, the enthusiasm, and the remarkable skill of this highly-trained young draughtsman, whose mind was saturated with the greatness of Imperial Rome, and whose knowledge of classical detail enabled him to translate vague suggestions into practical working drawings. The evidence on which I base this conclusion is the total dissimilarity between the character of the design of the Orangery and that of Mansart's known work, the long delay between the beginning of the Orangery and its actual building, and the facts that meanwhile Le Nôtre had paid a visit to Italy for the express purpose of collecting motives for the Royal galleries, and that Desgodetz, who brought out his work in 1682, was the one man who on his knowledge and attainments was qualified to make the design actually carried out. It is quite likely that Le Nôtre suggested generally the design of the Orangery, for gardener though he called himself, he also had a sense of the true Roman manner, its feeling for great scale and for direct simplicity of treatment. This would explain the delay of some five or six years. Le Nôtre probably suggested a fresh design, Desgodetz made it, and Mansart got the credit of a work which has commanded the admiration of all architects ever since. It was another triumph for the fashionable Court architect. It is true that in spite of all Mansart's precautions the Orangery leaked like a sieve, and the state of things was so bad that forty years later it was becoming actually ruinous through the constant penetration of water. But Mansart seems to have taken in his stride technical failures that would have ruined another man. The art of architecture has suffered from the fact that, under modern conditions, so much of it may be done by deputy, and that whereas in the arts of painting and sculpture an artist cannot go very far unless he can actually do the thing himself, in architecture he can get other people to do it for him. There is a good deal too much of the "entrepreneur" in the practice of modern architecture, as well as in the conduct of modern building.

The work at the Orangery went on very slowly. In 1681 further payments were made for moving earth "pour la nouvelle orangerie qui se devoit faire,"<sup>1</sup> and in 1683 earth was still being moved to complete this enormous transformation of ground.<sup>2</sup> The actual building was not begun till 1684. In that year 449,500 francs were advanced to the contractor Pierre le Maistre for materials and provisions and for masonry for "la grande Orangerie,"<sup>3</sup> 33,670 francs were paid to

<sup>1</sup> "Comptes," ii, 92.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 340.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 412.



Bergue and Belot for carting earth for the new Orangery, and there were the usual "gratifications" to workmen and soldiers injured on the work. In 1685<sup>1</sup> Le Maistre receives 611,900 francs for masonry of the grand Orangery and another 21,841 francs is paid for moving earth. It appears that the great staircases which flank the Orangery were then being built. In 1686 the parterres in front of the Orangery and above it were being formed, as appears from two entries of payments for some 2,491 lots of box for the parterres,<sup>2</sup> but the staircases were not completed by 1687, when small payments for masonry were still being made,<sup>3</sup> though the Orangery appears to have been built and fitted up, as there is an entry of 10,000 francs for iron grilles to the Orangery,<sup>4</sup> and in that year trees were moved from Fontainebleau to the new Orangery,<sup>5</sup> together with 82 cases of myrtles, and 100 orange trees from the nursery known as the "pépinierie du Roule." Finally, in 1688, Pierre Le Maistre, the contractor, received the balance of the contract for the masonry of the Orangery (1,228,540 francs, 17 sous, 8 deniers) and one or two minor works in the gardens of Versailles.<sup>6</sup> The work does not appear to have been very well done, for in 1689 the joints of the masonry of the staircases had to be re-pointed in cement and the layer of cement above the vaults repaired.<sup>7</sup> The latter was found to be defective again in 1692, and in 1695 "mastic gras" had to be provided to stop the incessant leakage from the stairs and vaults.<sup>8</sup>

I have gone into some detail in regard to the building of the Orangery because of its architectural importance, and because the circumstances surrounding its authorship seem to me so obscure. The jump from Clagny to the Orangery is so great, the first so trivial, the second so extraordinarily bold, that it is almost impossible to believe

<sup>1</sup> "Comptes," ii, 601, 605 and 885.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 1029.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 1099 and 1107.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 1180.

<sup>5</sup> In the "Comptes" for 1687 and other years there are constant entries of payment for the transportation of trees, fruit trees, shrubs and flowers of every sort. These were carted from places as far distant as Arras. The parterres must have been beautiful, but as all the trees for the alleys, bosquets, quincunxes and cut work were imported and planted in a naturally bad soil, they must have presented a dismal appearance till the latter part of the seventeenth century. Saint-Simon says, "Les Parcs et les avenues tous en plants ne peuvent venir." The views of the French engravers of the time were proleptic. Thus in 1683 Le Blond had already made engravings of the grand Orangery of Versailles, for which he received 850 francs ("Comptes," ii, 356), though the building was not completed till four years later.

<sup>6</sup> "Comptes," iii, 20.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, 241.

<sup>8</sup> See J. F. Blondel, "Cours d'Architecture," v, 380, note. The defect was finally remedied by a special mortar invented by a M. Louist.





1 la Cour du Château  
2 la 2<sup>e</sup> Cour grande Grille  
3 l'Avant-cour 4 la 1<sup>re</sup> Grille  
5 l'Avant-cour ou l'arrière-cour  
6 l'Avant-cour ou l'arrière-cour  
7 l'Avant-cour ou l'arrière-cour  
8 l'Avant-cour ou l'arrière-cour  
9 l'Avant-cour ou l'arrière-cour  
10 l'Avant-cour ou l'arrière-cour  
11 l'Avant-cour ou l'arrière-cour  
12 l'Avant-cour ou l'arrière-cour  
13 l'Avant-cour ou l'arrière-cour  
14 l'Avant-cour ou l'arrière-cour  
15 l'Avant-cour ou l'arrière-cour  
16 l'Avant-cour ou l'arrière-cour  
17 l'Avant-cour ou l'arrière-cour

LE DERRIERE DE L'ENTREE DE VERSAILLES, vu de la Cour du Château  
donc l'on découvre les Avenues et les Fontaines qui présentent un aspect nouveau.  
Singulier en regard que l'Entrée est admirable, en magnificence.  
A Paris, de l'Avant-cour ou l'arrière-cour, à la Cour du Château.

9 la Place d'Armes  
10 la 1<sup>re</sup> Cour grande Grille  
11 la 2<sup>e</sup> Cour grande Grille  
12 la 3<sup>e</sup> Cour grande Grille  
13 la 4<sup>e</sup> Cour grande Grille  
14 l'Avant-cour ou l'arrière-cour  
15 l'Avant-cour ou l'arrière-cour  
16 l'Avant-cour ou l'arrière-cour  
17 l'Avant-cour ou l'arrière-cour

[Perille

VERSAILLES, VIEW FROM THE FORECOURT SHOWING THE STABLES AND THE AVENUES (see p. 196)





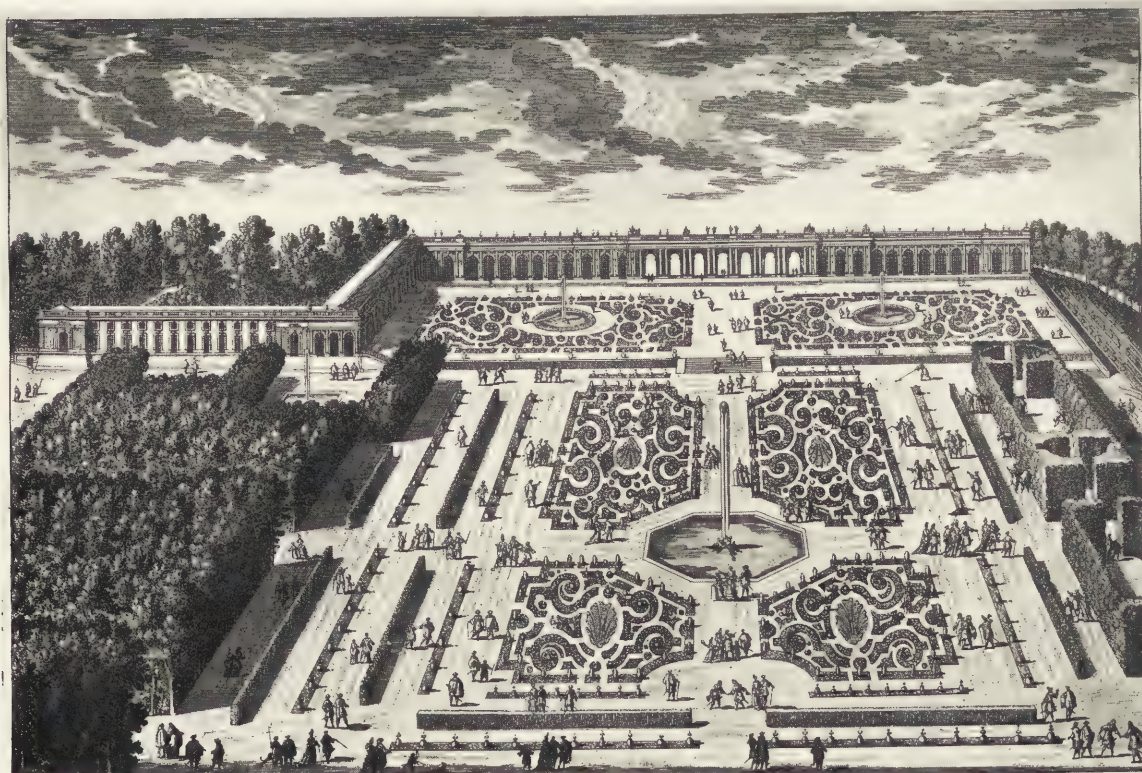
J. Mariette del. G. P. P.

*Vue en Perspective de Trianon du côté du Jardin.*

Perelle f.

[Perelle

VERSAILLES—THE TRIANON DE PORCELAIN. DESTROYED (see p. 196)



*Le Château de Trianon du côté du Jardin*

*A Paris chez J. Mariette aux colonnes d'hyculis.*

[Perelle

VERSAILLES—THE GRAND TRIANON. J. H. MANSART (see p. 197)

I. TO FACE P. 195]



that the same man designed them both at nearly the same time, and the conclusion I draw from this is that, though Mansart was the official architect, the design which was actually executed was not, in fact, made by him, but made for him by Desgodetz, and probably on hints and suggestions given by Le Nôtre, "bon architecte," as Saint-Simon calls him, and familiar, as Mansart was not, with the great buildings of Italy.

In 1683 Mansart was ennobled as the "Comte de Sagonne et autres lieux,"<sup>1</sup> and in 1685 appointed "premier architecte du Roi," and from the date of Clagny down to that of his death, all the royal buildings worth doing came into his hands and were designed in his office. So far from being daunted by the vastness of his undertakings the King's passion for building seems almost to have become a mania, only arrested in 1688-9 by his rapidly increasing financial difficulties. In the years between 1680 and 1688 the annual expenditure in buildings had varied between six and eight million livres a year, rising to fourteen millions in 1685. After 1688 the expenditure dropped to about four million, and after 1691 it did not exceed one-and-a-half million, and part of that was in settlement of debts incurred earlier in the reign. The total expenditure on buildings and gardens for the years 1681-87 amounted to 57,657,478 francs, 6 sous, 2 deniers, whereas for the years 1688-95 it dropped to 20,517,886 francs, 12 sous, 4 deniers. "L'année 1689 clôt l'ère des grands travaux, la période des constructions nouvelles—a partir de 1690 les finances de l'Etat, suffiront a peine a l'entretien des palais, a la conservation des établissements, qui comme la manufacture des Gobelins ou l'Académie de Rome périraient, le jour ou les subventions accoutumées viendraient a leur manquer."<sup>2</sup> Mansart made the most of his opportunities in those memorable seven years (1681-88). The stables at Versailles, the Grand Commun, and the Grand Trianon followed in quick succession. Marly, begun in 1679, was not finished in 1695, and the church of the Invalides begun in 1680 was not nearly completed in 1693-94. The Grande et Petite Écurie, the two well-known stables standing between the arms of the Patte d'Oie opposite the entrance to the palace, were begun in 1679 and finished in 1683. They contained stabling for some six hundred horses, with carriages and harness to match, many of the latter elaborately decorated, including "un carrosse de parade pour Sa Majesté, d'une magnificence extra-

<sup>1</sup> Herluison, "Actes d'État-Civil."

<sup>2</sup> M. Guiffrey, Introduction to "Comptes," vol. iii, p. 6.



ordinaire tout brodé dedans et dehors, dont le train est très beau et les harnois extrêmement riches."<sup>1</sup> The entrance front of the Grand Écurie is one of the most satisfactory pieces of architecture at Versailles. The central doorway is rather clumsy, and the trophies below the string-course are too low on the piers, indeed they might have been omitted with advantage to the design, but the scale is well maintained, and the planes are very well managed. The trophies here and on the pilasters of the entrance to the Grand Commun are as usual inimitable. The Grand Commun, which included the kitchen and offices, was built to house the royal servants, and was designed for occupation by 1,500 people. It adjoins the Aisle des Ministres on the south side of the forecourt, and is not noticeable except for its extent and the extreme inconvenience of its planning. The King, who was a prodigious eater, always dined by himself in the room on the first floor at the back of the Galerie des Glaces, and overlooking the Cour de Marbre. In order to reach this room, dishes had to be brought from the kitchen across a street (now the Rue Gambetta) along the south wing of the palace up a staircase,<sup>2</sup> and so through innumerable corridors and passages till they finally reached the King's chamber, in the centre of the palace.

The Grand Trianon replaced an earlier building, the Trianon de Porcelaine. This was built from the designs of D'Orbay<sup>3</sup> in 1670-75 as a sort of garden banqueting house near the northern arm of the grand canal, and it was intended more especially for the delectation of Mme. de Montespan. Its name arose from the quantity of china ornament used in its decoration. The floor of the salon<sup>4</sup> was in faience, and the decoration was intended to be in the Chinese manner. Le Hongre was employed on its painting, and Jouvenet, Masson, Mazeline and another Le Hongre on the modelled ornaments of the roofs.<sup>5</sup> In 1672 2,000 francs were paid to Le Maire "faïencier, a Compte des Vases qu'il a fourny," and also for "400 carreaux violets," and there are further payments for vases, stoves and ornaments in faience, and one

<sup>1</sup> "The Mercure de Paris," 1686, quoted by M. Cazes. M. Cazes says that in 1750 there were 2,200 horses in the Grand et Petite Ecurie in addition to 300 hunters.

<sup>2</sup> Destroyed by Louis Phillippe. See E. Caze's "Le Château de Versailles," p. 514. The Grand Commun was converted into a military hospital in 1832.

<sup>3</sup> In 1670 a payment of 155,600 francs was made to Bergeron, mason, for work at Trianon.

<sup>4</sup> "Comptes," i, 1291.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, i, 636-637, 705, also 588. In 1672 40,000 francs were assigned for the sculpture, painting and lead ornaments of the roofs at Trianon. The total cost of the Trianon de Porcelaine, 1671-75, was 312,311 francs, 12 sous, 2 deniers.

of 9,900 francs for mirrors. By a most unfortunate caprice Louis XIV swept the whole of this away in 1686-7, and instructed Mansart to design the building now known as the Grand Trianon. Not a vestige of the Trianon de Porcelaine appears to have survived, and with it we have lost invaluable evidence in regard to this early anticipation of the chinoiserie of the following century. Fortunately, Perelle made two engravings of the Trianon de Porcelaine. The elaborate ornament of the roofs and the urns on the balustrade are clearly shown. In the view from the garden a straight avenue is shown leading to the lake in front of Clagny in the remote distance, with Versailles, as left by Le Vau, shown on the right. The curious thing is that only a year before Louis XIV ordered the destruction of the Trianon de Porcelaine, he had sent six Jesuit mathematicians on a mission to China, and twelve more and two Jesuit brothers to India.<sup>1</sup>

Mansart's design for the new Trianon was only symmetrical on the entrance side, where it presented L-shaped buildings, joined by an open colonnade in the centre. It included a Cabinet des Glaces, kitchen and offices, a Salle des Seigneurs, Salle de Comédie, Salle du Billard, chapel and long gallery. The elevations are commonplace. With small variations in the entablature, and the archivolts of the windows, Mansart repeated the first-floor order of his garden front of Versailles. To transpose designs from the first to the ground floor in this way shows an inadequate sense of the meaning of architecture and of the duties of an architect, and it is strange that Louis XIV should have allowed himself to be imposed on, for if he had really understood architecture he must have known that a design carefully studied for its position high above the eye must suffer if it is translated literally to the ground for a totally different purpose, and to transplant architecture in this wholesale manner is to treat it as so much scene-painting without any organic life and intention of its own. Short cuts to design such as these are unworthy of an architect who has respect for his art. However, it saved Mansart the trouble of a fresh design, and it appears to have been good enough for Louis XIV. The Grand Trianon was the scene of the famous episode of "la fenêtre de Trianon," of which Saint-Simon says, "La Fenêtre de Trianon fit la guerre de 1688."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Comptes," ii, 913.

<sup>2</sup> Saint-Simon, who tells the story in his admirable manner, refers it to the Trianon de Porcelaine. The scene must, however, have been the Grand Trianon, as Louvois did not succeed Colbert till the death of the latter in 1683, and "la guerre de 1688" fixes the date.



When the walls were going up the King remarked that one window was set out inaccurately. Louvois, "qui naturellement étoit brutal," insisted that it was all right, whereupon the King turned his back on him and proceeded to another part of the building. Next day he sent for Le Nôtre, and asked him to ascertain whether the window was rightly set out or not. Le Nôtre, fearing the anger of Louvois, evaded the point till finally the King ordered Le Nôtre to meet him and Louvois at the Trianon. Louvois again insisted that the window matched the rest. The King contented himself with ordering Le Nôtre to measure it then and there. Louvois stood by, grumbling audibly. When Le Nôtre had completed his measurements the King asked him the result, but getting no definite answer, ordered him to say outright what he had found, and Le Nôtre had to admit that the King was right. Whereupon the King turned upon Louvois, and in the presence of all his courtiers, valets and workmen, "lava fortement la tête." Louvois was so alarmed that he admitted to his friends that his only chance was to distract the King's attention from his buildings by a war, and within the year he succeeded in bringing about a war that "ruina la France au dedans, ne l'étendit point au dehors—et produisit des événements honteux."<sup>1</sup>

By the year 1680 a total sum of 25,725,836 francs, 4 sous, 8 deniers,<sup>2</sup> had been spent on Versailles, 8,183,718 francs, 10 sous, 4 deniers had been spent on the Louvre and Tuileries, 3,981,358 francs, 14 sous, 9 deniers, on S. Germain (the last four years of it under Mansart), 1,557,356 francs, 14 sous, 7 deniers on Fontainebleau, 1,986,209 francs, 9 sous, 7 deniers on Clagny, and 4,019,718 francs on other Royal buildings. Notwithstanding this expenditure, the King did not hesitate to embark on a fresh enterprise at Marly. Versailles was already too public. He therefore cast about for a place where he could build some modest country house for his own personal use, although he already had half a dozen Royal houses admirably suited for the purpose. The first idea of Marly was just a place for a three days' visit two or three times a year. "Il trouva derrière<sup>3</sup> Lucienne un vallon, étroit, profond, à bords escarpés, inaccessible, par ses marécages, sans aucune vue," and here, in this "repaire des serpents et de charognes, de crapeaux et de grenouilles,"<sup>4</sup> he instructed Mansart to design and build one of the most idiotic

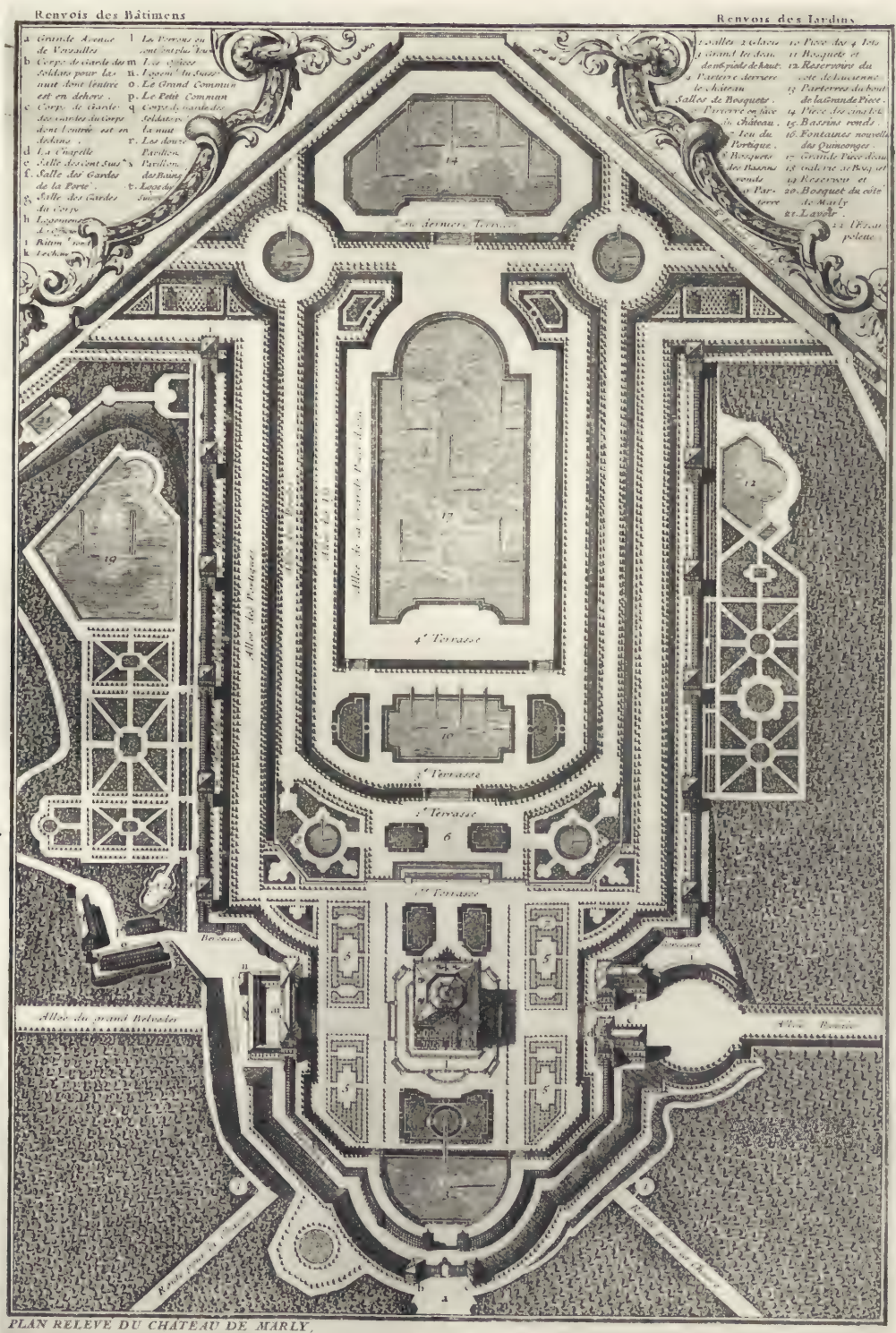
<sup>1</sup> Saint-Simon. M. Cazes wrongly attributes this story to Dangeau.

<sup>2</sup> "Comptes," i, 1373.

<sup>3</sup> Louveciennes, where Ledoux built the residence of Madame du Barry towards the end of the reign of Louis XV.

<sup>4</sup> Saint-Simon.





MARLY. GENERAL PLAN (see p. 199)



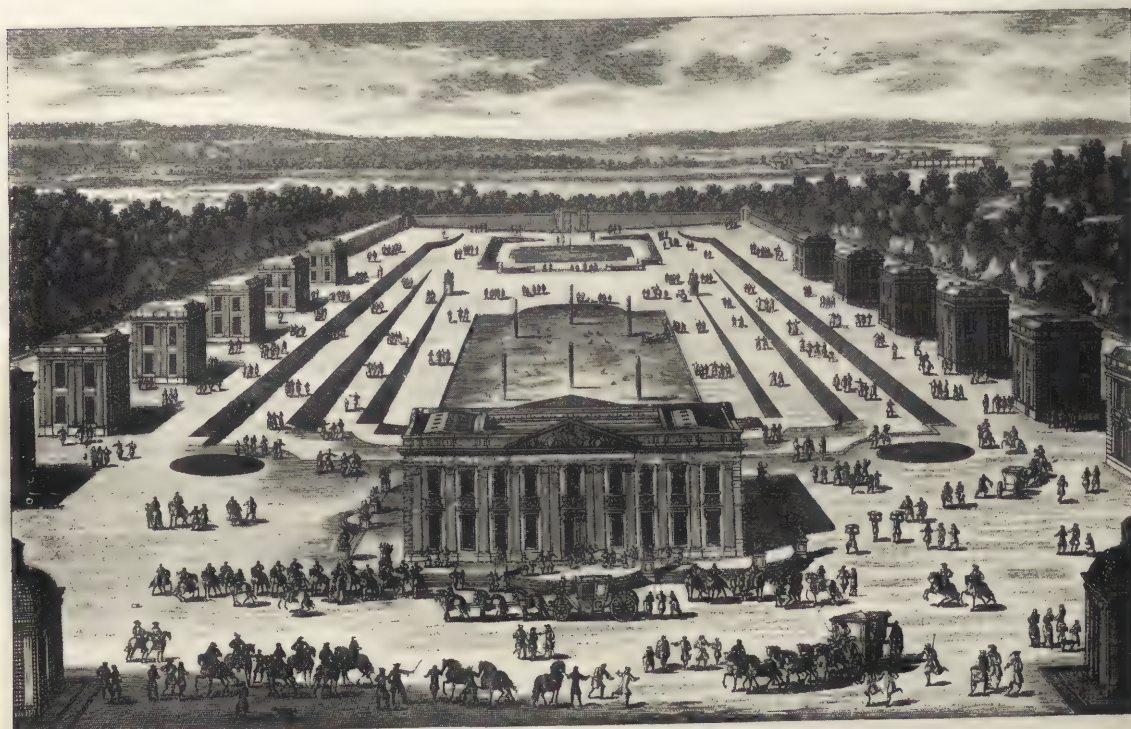


LE CHÂTEAU DE MARLY du côté des Jardins

A Paris Chez L. Mariette rue d'Angoulême à la Vieille. A la Librairie du Roy

[Perelle

MARLY—VIEW FROM THE GARDENS. J. H. MANSART (p. 199)



LE CHÂTEAU DE MARLY

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[Perelle

MARLY. VIEW FROM THE ENTRANCE (p. 199)



country houses that has ever been conceived. Saint-Simon asserts quite wrongly that the cost of it from first to last was nearly equal to that of Versailles,<sup>1</sup> but everything had to be done; whole groves were transplanted from Compiègne and duly died, woods were turned into water-pieces and again transformed into woods, and then there was the "machine de Marly," built and maintained at great cost to pump water to Marly and Versailles, imperfectly fulfilling its purpose, and never ceasing to produce an intolerable noise by the groaning and creaking of its machinery. Marly was begun in 1679 and was not finished in 1695, by which date the total cost amounted to over 11 million francs. The Château itself, finished in 1684, was a relatively modest two-storey building in nine bays, divided by Corinthian pilasters with the usual three-bay frontispiece and pediment in the centre, but to right and left of this, and extending beyond it into the gardens, was a series of isolated two-storey pavilions, six square "boxes," on each side of the great water-piece. These were intended for the lodgement of the Court and symbolized the planets attending on le Roi Soleil. Their only means of communication were *berceaux* of trellis work. The kitchens and offices were placed in an out-of-the-way corner outside the enclosure, and at a distance of some 240 yards from the King's house, and the distance of the end pavilion from the latter was nearly one-third of a mile. Mdme. de Maintenon, who hated fresh air, complained that there was not a single door or window at Marly that shut. On the other hand, this private week-end house of the King had its chapel, its lodgements for day guards and night guards and for 100 Swiss guards, its cascades and its water-pieces. The gardens within the enclosure measured 2,550 feet by 1,050 feet, but the house had no stables, and although in Perelle's view carriages and horses are shown close up to the house, it appears from his plan that they must have come up steps to get there. After the death of Louis XIV Marly was abandoned. The great cascade was destroyed before 1750, and the "machine de Marly" groaned away its laborious existence.

Mdme. Campan,<sup>2</sup> writing some hundred years later, says: "Les

<sup>1</sup> The "Comptes" show that this was a gross exaggeration. Between 1681 and 1687, 22,196,430 francs were spent on the Château and gardens of Versailles, whereas the total expenditure for that period on the Château and machine of Marly was 5,918,005 francs. Saint-Simon, when dealing with the follies of Louis XIV, was apt to let his pen run away with him.

<sup>2</sup> "Mémoires sur la vie de Marie Antoinette," chap. ix, p. 152 (ed. Nelson). Piganiol de la Force says that the iron pipe conveying water from the aqueduct to the reservoir of Marly was 18 inches in diameter ("Desc. de Paris," ix, 279).



siècles ont leur couleur et bien positivement: Marly reportait encore plus que Versailles vers celui de Louis XIV: tout semblait y avoir été construit par la magique puissance d'une baguette de fée: Les palais, les jardins de cette maison de plaisance, pouvaient aussi se comparer aux décorations théâtrales d'une cinquième acte d'opera." The expenses of the entertainments at Marly and the periodical removals of the Court, all at the Royal expense, were so great that the "voyages de Marly" were abandoned by Louis XVI. Within ten years of the date at which Mdme. Campan wrote the whole place was destroyed, even to the cast-iron water pipes, which were dragged out of the earth by the revolutionaries.

## CHAPTER XV

### JULES HARDOUIN MANSART

ABOUT 1683 Mansart was summoned to Chantilly by the Grand Condé. Gittard had for years been at work here for Condé, but that made no difference to Mansart, who never allowed a colleague to stand in his way. Le Nôtre had been engaged in remodelling the grounds since 1663, and it was his fate throughout his career to have Mansart continually brought in on the top of him. Mansart designed the Orangery and certain alterations to the Petit Château before 1686, in which year Condé died. His son Henri Jules spent enormous sums in rebuilding the Château, and it was fortunate for Mansart's reputation that all his work here was destroyed at the Revolution, for Mansart ruined the old house.<sup>1</sup> M. Macon says: "La fin de son œuvre est déplorable, le vieux manoir perd alors son aspect pittoresque; l'édifice fantaisiste à lignes brisées, d'élévations inégales et de façades variées, ou l'architecture du quatorzième siècle et celle du seizième s'alliaient si heureusement, devient de 1688 à 1692 une énorme bâtisse uniforme, toute en hauteur, criblée de fenêtres, flanquée de tours terminées en dome." Mansart began doing the same thing at S. Germain. His work both here and at Chantilly was characteristic of the man. He seems to have been temperamentally hard, vulgar, and unsympathetic. Where François Blondel, a scholar and a gentleman, though a somewhat disagreeable one, had subordinated his design to the preservation of beautiful work of the past, Jules Hardouin Mansart swept the whole thing away, and substituted his own incongruous

<sup>1</sup> The whole of the Grand Château down to the ground floor was destroyed in 1793, and was rebuilt for the late Duc d'Aumale, 1876-1882, from the designs of the late M. Daumet. M. Daumet, accomplished architect as he was, unfortunately failed to catch the spirit of the work of any period of the past at Chantilly.



notions. The strange thing is that his employers should have had the bad taste and the ignorance of history to allow him to do these things, but the disasters of the latter part of the reign had not yet fallen on France, and any reverence for the past was forgotten in the anticipation of future glories. His people still believed in Louis XIV. Their eyes were still set on the future, not on a splendid historic past.

Between 1680-88 Mansart seems to have monopolized the whole of the official architecture of France. In 1680 he began his addition to Bruant's Church of the Invalides, the dome that was to surpass Wren's Cathedral, then slowly rising from the ashes of old S. Paul's. The great Hospital of the Invalides and its first church, begun in 1679, were completed by 1679-80. At this point<sup>1</sup> the work was taken out of the hands of Bruant, and Mansart, his old pupil and assistant, was commissioned to design the second church, "L'église du Dome," as it is called, in the official description of 1683. No explanation has ever been given why it should have been built at all, as it can never have been of any use to the Hospital itself, and it is unsuitable for public service. As a merely ornamental composition it has fine points, but if architecture is based on use and reason, Mansart's church of the "Invalides" was a wanton and prodigal extravagance. In the familiar phrase of the time, no doubt its justification was to render eternal the glory of the King, but by the irony of fate no one thinks of Louis XIV in the Church of the Invalides. It now serves as the not unworthy setting of the tomb of the greatest soldier of France.

A new model of the church was made at a cost of over 10,000 crowns, and of such accuracy and completeness that the very elaborate engravings in the "Description Générale" were prepared from this model.<sup>2</sup> In the "Comptes" for 1679 I find immediately next to an entry of a large payment to the contractors for the old church an entry of a payment of 400 francs, "a Mathieu<sup>3</sup> et Desgodetz pour plusieurs

<sup>1</sup> In December, 1680, 80,000 francs were paid to Michel Hardouin and Simon Pipault for masonry to the old church, as it was already called, in 1687. In the same account Carel Menuisier is paid 190 francs "pour avoir rétabli et changé le modèle de ladite église, comprise la sculpture." I take it this refers to the alterations necessitated by the junction of Bruant's church with Mansart's church of the Dome.

<sup>2</sup> "Description Générale de l'Hostel Royal des Invalides," p. 18 (1683).

<sup>3</sup> "Comptes," i, 1228. Claude Mathieu is described in the "Comptes" as "dessignateur"; elsewhere as "maçon," as "Mathieu et Pinart, jeunes architectes ayant le soin de la closture du nouveau parc de S. Germain en Laye," and again with Pinart as "maçons." Unless there is a confusion between father and son, Mathieu appears to have been a draughtsman, an architect, and a contractor for masonry and other works. See

plans elevations et profils." It may be only an accident that the two entries occur in an account for the Invalides side by side, but I suggest that the fact is further evidence of the view already advanced, that at this period Desgodetz was Mansart's "architecte sous clef," succeeded a little later by L'Assurance. The Church of the Invalides, however, is by no means on the same footing as the Orangery of Versailles. If the latter is entirely alien to Mansart's manner, the Invalides is its most characteristic expression. There is evidence that Mansart gave it his close personal attention, and though he was probably far too busy to make the drawings himself, the design, as a whole, owes its character to his inspiration and control. From certain points of view the Invalides is a fine composition, and the interior is admirable. For once in a way Mansart may have tried to satisfy himself, instead of limiting his horizon to the King's caprice.

The general plan consists of a square measuring about 156 feet on each face,<sup>1</sup> divided by transverse and longitudinal arms, with a dome of 75 feet diameter over their intersection. The four angles of the square are occupied by circular chapels communicating by passages with the transverse and longitudinal arms, and with the central space at the intersection. The longitudinal arm is on the axis line of the old church, the total length out to out measuring by scale about 440 feet. The Sanctuary was an oval chapel placed at the junction between the square of the Church of the Dome and the older church, and the high altar was placed on the axis line of the church. To the right and left of the Sanctuary two circular chambers, 30 feet in diameter, were provided as sacristies. The height from the floor to the summit of the "Cross of the Pyramid" above the dome is given as  $49\frac{1}{2}$  fathoms (297 feet).<sup>2</sup>

The Invalides inevitably challenges comparison with S. Paul's

"Comptes," i, 1072, 1125, 1200, 1212, 1228, 1242, 1252, 1262, 1335. In 1689 Mathieu submitted his design for a bridge at Lyons to the Academy of Architecture, and his name frequently occurs in its "Procès-Verbaux."

<sup>1</sup> "Desc. Générale" says about 26 fathoms, but by scale it measures 25. The dimensions of the description given in the text of the "Description Générale" were taken from the model and not from the executed work, but the description does not tally with the dimensions of the engravings.

<sup>2</sup> S. Paul's measures internally 500 feet long, 100 feet wide at the entrance, 223 feet wide at the transepts. The height from floor to the top of the Cross is 360 feet. The diameter of the dome is 106 feet, and the height to the top of the coping of the balustrade of the church is 110 feet. See "Public Buildings of London," Britton and Pugin, i, 18-22.



Cathedral. Wren's was first in the field, his first (the rejected) design was made before Mansart was even heard of, and the first stone of S. Paul's was actually laid in 1675, the last stone to the top of the Lantern being laid by Wren's son in 1710. The total cost was a little over £1,100,000 in money of the time. Mansart's church was begun in 1680, the last payment was made in 1705, and the total cost amounted to about 2,710,000 francs (money of the time).<sup>1</sup> It is exceedingly difficult to assess the value of the franc in the reign of Louis XIV. If its purchasing value is taken as equivalent to about five francs (pre-war values), the cost would be about £542,000. Mansart's problem was a very much simpler one than Wren's. He was not limited, as Wren was, by the requirements of Protestant service, and the incapacity of the English clergy to realize that it might be possible to design a great church on any other lines than those of the English mediaeval Cathedral. The consequence was that whereas Wren was let in for the unhappy treatment of the diagonal angles under the pendentives of the dome, Mansart was free to carry out his very successful design of the piers of the four arches carrying the drum of the dome. For the same reason Mansart was able to design the circular chapels of the four angles and the oval chapel of the Sanctuary with admirable effect in perspective. It is certain that Wren would have anticipated him in this had he been allowed to do so, as in his rejected design he had actually provided four circular chapels on the diagonals, with openings to the longitudinal and transverse arms, and the Sanctuary in this design is relatively in the same position as Mansart's. In the rejected design on the exterior Wren cut off the four angles by quadrant curves, instead of leaving them square as at the Invalides. It is not known whether Mansart knew of Wren's rejected design, but the French and English Courts were still in close touch, and it is by no means improbable that Wren's rejected plan for S. Paul's may have suggested Mansart's plan for the Invalides. Both architects must have been familiar with the various projects for S. Peter's at Rome. In their elevations and sections each man followed the manner of his country. Wren, who began with the tradition of Inigo Jones, speedily transformed it into a manner of his own, and developed it with all the resources of his extraordinary genius. Mansart adhered, though with many variations, to the motives of

<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to give the exact figure, as in the "Comptes" for the years 1688-1695, the Hôtel et Eglise des Invalides, Convent des Capucines, and Place Vendôme are mixed up in one account. I have deducted the cost of the Place Vendôme, certain terraces, and 80,000 francs for the Capucines.

Lemercier's design for the Church of the Sorbonne and of François Mansart's for the Val de Grâce, and he retained some of the worst features of the dome of the Val de Grâce, such as the tall, attenuated urns tucked close in to the surface of the dome. The general effect of his façade is rather *triste*, probably owing to the very unattractive stone, resembling light "brown" Yorkshire stone used in facing, which is emphasized by the whiter stone used for certain parts, such as the bases and plinths of the lower and upper orders, the balustrade and blocking courses.

The Invalides is undoubtedly an advance on the domes of the Sorbonne and the Val de Grâce, and yet it is open to serious criticism. The first and most obvious is that the dome and its drum overpower the substructure; it comes too close to the outer façades of the square, and the treatment of the latter is too trifling in design to stand up to the great predominant central mass. Wren's design with the dome at the intersection of the nave choir and transept, and the salients on the four diagonal angles, is far happier in composition. The drum of the dome of S. Paul's appears to be sufficiently buttressed, and the various salients and re-entrants in the general blocking out of the substructure prevent the harsh and abrupt transition noticeable in Mansart's design. On the other hand, the principal façade of the Invalides to the place Vauban has many fine points in detail; and the Doric order is admirable. Mansart avoided the worst fault in Wren's design, viz., the extension of the lower order of columns on the west front beyond the frontispiece of the upper storey, so that above these columns there is nothing but the inner pilasters of the two side towers, and there is a want of logical relation between the treatment of the lower order and of the order above it.<sup>1</sup> Mansart avoided this by two returns in his Doric order, and justified the extension over the bays on either side of the frontispiece by placing important figures above the columns of these two end bays. In the treatment of the centre part of this design he was more successful than Wren, but there is no comparison between his feeble and disappointing design for the end bays of the façade, and Wren's western Towers, the most picturesque and romantic venture ever made in neo-classic design. It is only fair to Mansart to point out that his complete design was never carried out. He proposed to form a vast Place in front of his church, and to carry out from the angles of his façade certain buildings connecting up with two

<sup>1</sup> In a geometrical elevation this would not have been noticeable, but for once in a way Wren forgot to think in more than two dimensions.



advanced pavilions, from which in turn quadrant colonnades were to be carried forward, terminating in two more pavilions at a considerable distance in advance of the church. By this means the whole of Bruant's building would have been concealed, and the effect would have vaguely recalled half of Bernini's colonnade at Rome. The pavilions, as shown in Félibien's description, were shapeless looking things. Mansart's taste was not to be trusted, nor did he think his designs out. Thus, for example, the order and entablature of the frontispiece in the upper storey simply ignore the treatment of the adjoining bays, and Mansart permitted himself the solecism of jumping from the Doric to the Corinthian order, instead of following on with the orthodox Ionic. At the "Paroisse," Versailles, he took the same liberty with the orders.

Fine as it is in many ways, I do not think Mansart's design of the drum and dome of the Invalides can compare for an instant with Wren's design for the dome of S. Paul's. The habit of incessant breaks and returns in entablatures was one of the bad traditions of French seventeenth century architecture,<sup>1</sup> and Mansart followed it blindly. Round the drum of his dome he placed eight very substantial buttresses with engaged columns at the angles, returned his entablature and balustrade round them, and then got back to the cornice of the attic under the dome by large curved trusses. The buttresses are arranged in pairs, with a window between each pair of buttresses. The arrangement is clever, and so far as mere technique is concerned, perfectly handled, but there is too much detail, and it is all there to see. There is no mystery and romance to impress the imagination, like the superb sweep of the balustrade round the attic storey of the dome of S. Paul's, and the beautiful treatment of the columns round the drum. The value given to the shadows of the three open intercolumniations by the solid mass of every fourth bay, is typical of the inspiration that makes S. Paul's one of the supreme architectural achievements in the world.

On the top of his dome Mansart placed a remarkable lantern surmounted by an obelisk, and he made the outline worse by an overhanging balcony which disconnected the dome and its superstructure. His first idea had lost itself in details; moreover, Mansart was immersed in business and ever deepening intrigues, and must have left the work almost entirely to his subordinates. In 1685 Mansart, whose salary was 10,000 francs per annum, had as his draughtsmen Cauchy, Daviler and Pierre Cailleteau "dit L'Assurance," all found for him by the State

<sup>1</sup> The Academy of Architecture had, however, explicitly condemned this practice.

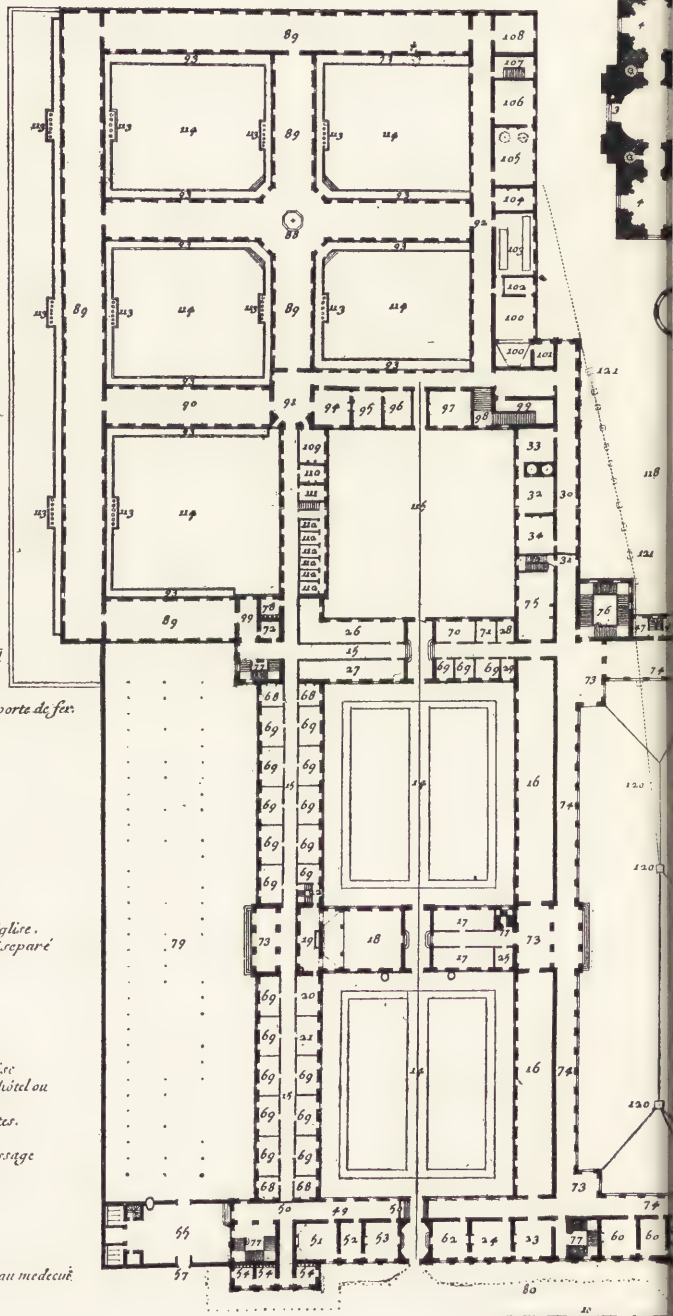


CHURCH OF THE DOME, LES INVALIDES—ELEVATION. J. H. MANSART (p. 206)  
(FROM "DESCRIPTION GÉNÉRALE")



# Plan general du rez de chaussée de tous les

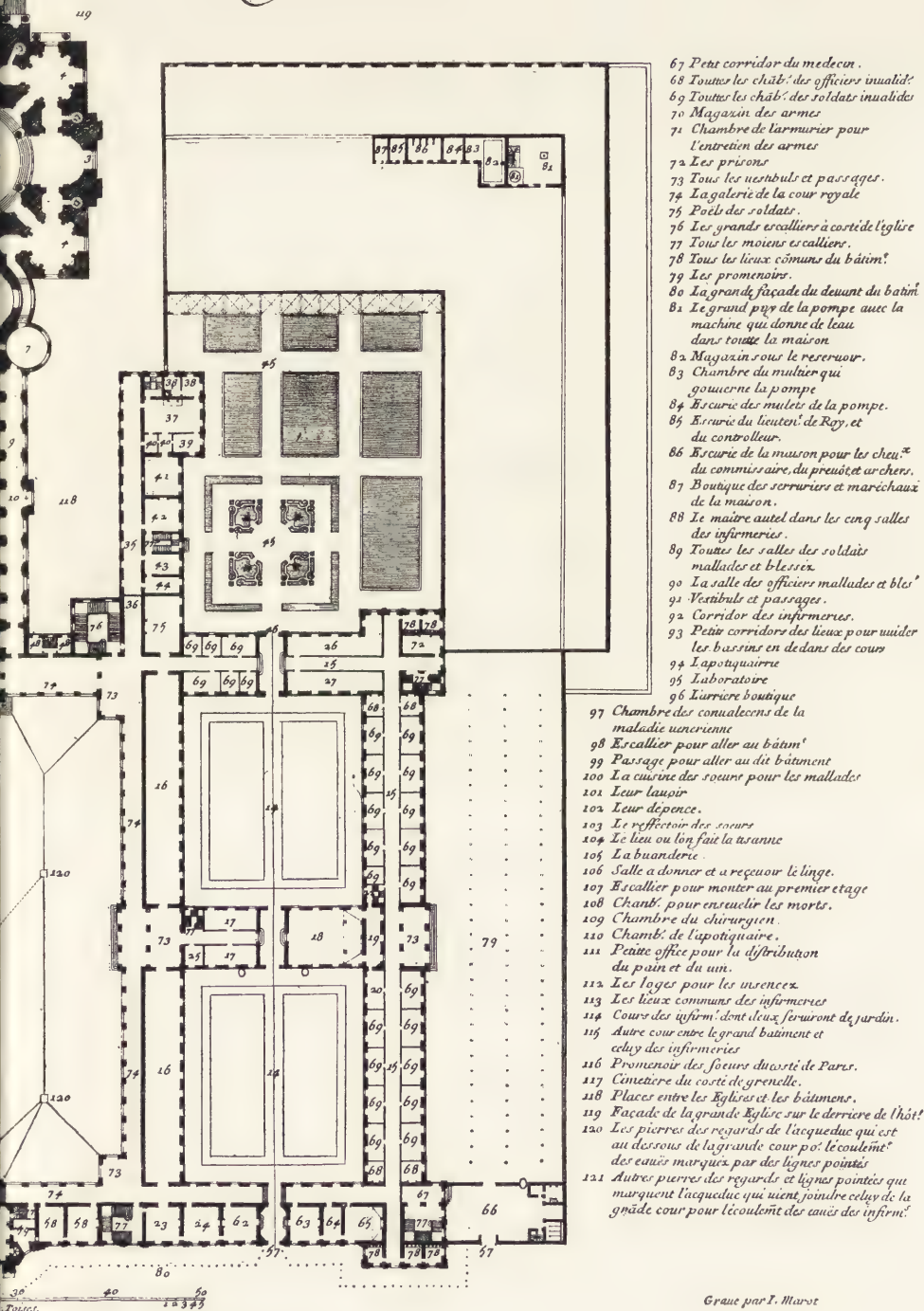
- 1 Le milieu du dôme de la grande Eglise.
- 2 Coeur et maître autel po' les 2 Eglises.
- 3 Chappelles qui croisent le dôme.
- 4 Grâdes chappelles aux 4 coins du dôme.
- 5 Portail de la grande Eglise.
- 6 Escaliers pour monter en haut sur les platres, formes des combles.
- 7 Les Sacristie.
- 8 L'Eglise de la maison.
- 9 Bas cortès de la dite Eglise.
- 10 Demie lune ou sont les chappelles des bas cortès de la dite Eglise.
- 11 La portée de l'Eglise de la maison.
- 12 Grand perron du portail de l'Eglise dans la cour Royale.
- 13 La cour Royale.
- 14 Les moiennes cours.
- 15 Corridor de S<sup>t</sup> Charlemagne qui regnent partout.
- 16 Les refectoirs des soldats.
- 17 Les refectoirs des officiers.
- 18 Grandes cuisines des officiers et sold.
- 19 Lauoirs derrier les dites cuisines.
- 20 Dépences ou l'on recoit la viande.
- 21 Magasin du pourvoir.
- 22 Escaliers des cuisines pour monter aux chambres des cuisiniers.
- 23 Les offices des sommeliers.
- 24 Les sommeliers.
- 25 Petites offices du vin ent' les refectoirs.
- 26 Les lingeries et garde meuble.
- 27 Magasin du garde meuble.
- 28 Magasin du linge des officiers.
- 29 Magasin du linge des tables des refect.
- 30 Corridor dans la boulangerie réparé par une grille et porte de fer.
- 31 La grille et la porte de fer.
- 32 La boulangerie.
- 33 Buiche de la boulangerie qui sert de fournil.
- 34 Chambre des boulangers.
- 35 Corridor dans l'appartem<sup>t</sup> des pretres de la mission réparé par une grille et porte de fer.
- 36 La grille et la porte de fer.
- 37 Leur cuisine.
- 38 Leur fournil.
- 39 Leur dépence.
- 40 Lauoir et passage a leur refectoir.
- 41 Leur refectoir.
- 42 Leur parloir.
- 43 Chambre qui sert de magasin.
- 44 Chambre de leur portier.
- 45 Leur jardin.
- 46 La grille et la porte de fer du jardin.
- 47 Petits magasins.
- 48 Autres petits magasins qui servent a l'Eglise.
- 49 Corridor dans l'appartem<sup>t</sup> du gouvern<sup>r</sup> réparé par des grilles et portes de fer.
- 50 La grille et la porte de fer.
- 51 Sa cuisine.
- 52 Sa dépence.
- 53 Son office.
- 54 Ses lieux.
- 55 Sa basse cour avec ses écuries et remise.
- 56 Grand portail et vestibul de l'entrée de l'hôtel ou sont les armes du corps de garde.
- 57 Les moiennes portes de l'entrée des costes.
- 58 Grand corps de garde.
- 59 Corps de garde des officiers dans le passage.
- 60 Chambres des portiers.
- 61 Magasin et passage des portiers.
- 62 Chambre qui sert de magasin.
- 63 Office qui sert de magasin.
- 64 Dépence qui sert de chambre.
- 65 Cuisine qui sert de chambre.
- 66 Basse cour cuisine et écurie qui sert au medecin.



PLAN OF LES INVALIDES. LIBERAL

(FROM "DESCRIPT

## bâtimens de l'Hôtel Royal des Inualides.



- 67 Petit corridor du medecin.  
 68 Toutes les chab. des officiers invalides.  
 69 Toutes les chab. des soldats invalides.  
 70 Magasin des armes.  
 71 Chambre de l'armurier pour l'entretien des armes.  
 72 Les prisons.  
 73 Tous les vestibuls et passages.  
 74 La galerie de la cour royale.  
 75 Poels des soldats.  
 76 Les grands escaliers à corté de l'église.  
 77 Tous les moens et calliers.  
 78 Tous les lieux communs du bâtim.  
 79 Les promenoirs.  
 80 La grande façade du devant du bâtim.  
 81 Le grand puy de la pompe avec la machine qui donne de l'eau dans toute la maison.  
 82 Magasin sous le reservoir.  
 83 Chambre du maitre qui gouverne la pompe.  
 84 Escurie des mulets de la pompe.  
 85 Escurie du lieutenant de Roy, et du contrôleur.  
 86 Escurie de la maison pour les chev.  
 du commissaire, du presôt et archers.  
 87 Boutique des serruriers et maréchaux de la maison.  
 88 Le maître autel dans les cinq salles des infirmeries.  
 89 Toutes les salles des soldats malades et blessés.  
 90 La salle des officiers malades et blessés.  
 91 Vestibuls et passages.  
 92 Corridor des infirmeries.  
 93 Petit corridors des lieux pour vuider les bassins en dedans des cours.  
 94 L'apothiquaire.  
 95 Laboratoire.  
 96 L'arrière boutique.  
 97 Chambre des conualecens de la maladie venérienne.  
 98 Escallier pour aller au bâtim.  
 99 Passage pour aller au dit bâtiment.  
 100 La cuisine des roque pour les malades.  
 101 Leur laupir.  
 102 Leur dépence.  
 103 Le vestifoir des cours.  
 104 Le lieu ou l'on fait la saunne.  
 105 La buanderie.  
 106 Salle à donner et à recevoir le linge.  
 107 Escallier pour monter au premier étage.  
 108 Chamb. pour ensevelir les morts.  
 109 Chambre du chirurgien.  
 110 Chamb. de l'apothiquaire.  
 111 Petite office pour la distribution du pain et du vin.  
 112 Les loges pour les usances.  
 113 Les lieux communs des infirmeries.  
 114 Cours des infirm. dont deux serviront de jardin.  
 115 Autre cour entre le grand bâtiment et celui des infirmeries.  
 116 Promenoir des sœurs duarité de Paris.  
 117 Cimetière du costé de grenelle.  
 118 Places entre les Eglises et les bâtimens.  
 119 Facade de la grande Eglise sur le derriere de l'hôt.  
 120 Les pierres des regards de l'aqueduc qui est au dessous de la grande cour po. l'écoulem.  
 des eaux marquez par des lignes pointées.  
 121 Autres pierres des regards et lignes pointées qui marquent l'aqueduc qui vient joindre celui de la gnade cour pour l'écoulem.  
 des canes des infirm.

Grave par F. Marot

AND J. H. MANSART (see p. 204)

ÉRALE")





LES INVALIDES. SECTION OF CHURCH OF THE DOME, AND PART OF THE CHURCH. LIBERAL  
 BRUANT (see p. 206)  
 (FROM "DESCRIPTION GÉNÉRALE")

at salaries up to 1,200 francs per annum. These men continued in his service year after year, and an entry in the "Comptes" (iii, 1151) in 1695 reveals the fact that L'Assurance, whose salary was much in arrear, had been employed continuously at the Invalides from 1685 to 1695. Indeed Saint-Simon does not hesitate to say that he was the "architecte sous clef," the ghost who did the real work both for Mansart and De Cotte. "Ils tiroient tout d'un dessinateur qu'ils tenoient clos et a l'écart chez eux, qui s'appeloit L'Assurance, sans lequel ils ne pouvoient rien." L'Assurance appears again in the "Comptes" in 1702 in connection with the church of the Invalides, when he is mentioned as officially employed as an architect in the fabric, at a salary of 1,000 francs per annum, and De Cotte "Intendant des Bâtimens," was also "contrôleur des bâtimens de l'Hôtel Royal des Invalides."<sup>1</sup> My impression from the evidence is that Mansart may have made the original sketches from which the model was made, but left all details to his contractors and subordinates after the work was once started. It would be extremely illuminating to see any authentic working drawings made by Mansart himself, if such there are, in order to determine what part he really took in the buildings attributed to him. I feel somewhat sceptical about those rough sketches made, "avec du charbon ou une grosse plume," to which D'Argenville refers. There can be no doubt that he relied largely on others both in design and construction, and with his plethoric practice he could not possibly have done very much himself. The question is whether at any time he possessed the power of designing and carrying through his buildings himself. He was in the habit of consulting the Academy of Architecture on points of construction.<sup>2</sup> Thus in 1689 he twice laid his designs for the dome of the Invalides before the company "pour scavoir son sentiment sur quelques doutes qu'il avoit touchant la solidité de l'assemblage de la Charpente dudit dome." The company approved of his proposals to insert iron diagonal ties and bands of iron round the circumference to prevent its spreading.<sup>3</sup> Mansart knew little

<sup>1</sup> "Comptes," iv, 912. De Cotte's salary was then 2,500 francs per annum.

<sup>2</sup> See "Procès-Verbaux de l'Acad. Royale d'Arch.," i, 161, 289.

<sup>3</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," iii, 175. Mansart's dome consisted of two shells. The lower dome was coffered and enriched, and the upper part of it was truncated, forming a large circular opening, which gave on to the ceiling of an upper internal dome, half egg-shaped in section and apparently constructed of very light masonry. The external dome stood clear above this, and was carried by an elaborate system of timber trusses, which also supported the lantern at the top. (See Blondel, "Arch. Franc.," i, No. 1, p. 7.) The space between the top of the lowest dome and the domical ceiling was lit by openings in the attic storey, an invention greatly admired by later critics.



about construction, as was shown by his ridiculous failure at Moulins, but no scruple of conscience or misgiving as to his own capacity deterred him from grasping at any and every important undertaking. He felt he could always rely on his staff, and if anything went wrong there was always the King's protection to silence criticism. The evidence is all in favour of Saint-Simon's view that Mansart's career was a gigantic piece of charlatanism and imposture.

The interior of the church seems to me more successful than the exterior. The finest artists of the time were employed on its decoration. Tubby, van Cleve, L'Espignola, Varin the elder, Coysevox, Coustou and Jouvenet sculptors, Coypel, Delafosse, Corneille, Poerson and both the Boulognes among the painters—everything was of the very best that could be got in France at the time, and that meant in the whole of Europe. There is a curious contradiction between the flat face of the angle piers and pendentives, and the curve on plan of the entablature of the lower order. Yet the detail throughout is so consummate that criticism is difficult, and it is indeed a masterpiece of craftsmanship. But what one misses at the Invalides is that divine fire which reaches beyond mere admiration to emotion. Where in S. Paul's we find the touch of a very rare genius, at the Invalides we look in vain for anything more than a clever design, perfectly carried out. Mansart may have possessed a quick and ready invention, but he was far too successful to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

In 1684 Mansart gave a design for a "dome" for the Hôtel de Ville at Arles, but being a cautious man submitted it first to the Academy of Architecture. The vault which is over the vestibule is about 42 feet in diameter, and has a rise of some 5 feet, with rather thin walls. The thrust is described in the "Procès-Verbaux" of the Academy of Architecture as having been met by "quatre trompes aux quatre angles, et colonnes isolées en dedans ce que la Compagnie a fort approuvé."<sup>1</sup> In the year following he is said to have designed with Gittard the vestibule and façade of the Hôtel de Ville at Dijon.<sup>2</sup>

In 1685 Mansart designed the Place des Victoires in the Rue des Petits Champs to commemorate the victories of Louis XIV. The plan,

<sup>1</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," ii, 60. M. Lemonnier, in a note, says the 5 feet mentioned in the text equals about 8 feet. The building was begun in 1673 from a design by one of the Royers de la Valfenière. Mansart's designs were carried out by "un compagnon passant venant d'Italie." (See appendix to this volume on the vaulting of the Roussillon district.)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 72. Note by M. Lemonnier.





LA PLACE DES VICTOIRES, PARIS. ENGRAVED BY PFRELLIE (p. 208)











*La Place de Vendôme ou des Conquêtes*

*A Paris chez J. Moitteux rue St Jacques aux colonnes d'Apollon.*

PLACE VENDÔME, PARIS, WITH STATUE OF LOUIS XIV. ENGRAVED BY PERELLE (p. 209)



as designed and shown on the engraving published by Mariette, is elliptical, with wide openings on the longer sides. The façades have an arcaded and rusticated ground storey, with a two-storey Ionic order over, and a mansard roof with dormers. On either side of the openings in the sides were trophies, consisting of three marble Ionic columns on pedestals supporting large lanterns. In the spaces between the columns were suspended oval plaques of bronze, thirty-six in all, with reliefs commemorating various episodes in the life of the King. It appears from the engraving that the town of Paris presented the site, and that the Maréchal de la Feuillade presented the bronze statue of Louis le Grand by Desjardins, that stood inside an enclosure in the centre of the Place.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to judge of the effect of this Place as it was first designed and built. The north part was apparently left unfinished. Its present state is discreditable and deplorable. The old buildings still stand on the west and south-west sides and centre of south-east curve; the rest has been altered, and the fronts are (or were in 1910) covered with "Vêtements Caoutchouc, Modes, Deuil," etc., but I doubt if the Place des Victoires was ever anything but a failure. The scale is inadequate, even mean, and it was certainly inferior to the Place Vendôme or "des Conquêtes," one of the most dignified and satisfactory squares ever designed. The original idea of Louvois had been to form the Place Vendôme as a rectangular Place—round which were to be ranged buildings for the Royal Library, the Academies, the Grand Council and other institutions, but according to Saint-Simon the King altered this the very day after the death of Louvois in 1691.<sup>2</sup> The first design provided a Place 468 feet wide by 516 feet long with three sides only, the fourth to the rue S. Honoré being left open the full width. At the opposite end was to have been a grand archway, and the arcade on the ground floor was to form a covered walk all round. Brice says it would have been the largest and most magnificent Place in Europe. A good deal was actually begun when the King changed the whole scheme and handed over the site, buildings and all, to the town of Paris on condition that they built a hotel for the 2nd company of Musqueteers in the Faubourg S. Antoine. The cost of this was so great that the town had to sell the

<sup>1</sup> The statue of Louis XIV is described in the engraving as "de bronze doré et fondée toute d'une jet, avec la figure de la Renommée qui couronne ce monarque." The four slaves at the angles of the pedestal and the bas-reliefs and ornaments of the pedestal were in marble. This statue was destroyed and the existing monument put up in 1816. The four slaves were transferred to the entrance façade of the Invalides.

<sup>2</sup> Germain Brice, "Nouvelle Description," i, 382-7, says the change was made in 1699.



site to private persons who reduced the size of the Place by 60 feet all round and cut off the angles.

Mansart's last considerable work was the chapel at Versailles. A new chapel had been contemplated by the King as early as 1688, but it was not till 1699 that the existing chapel (the second by the way built since 1671) was demolished. L'Assurance, who had been one of Mansart's draughtsmen since 1685 at salaries ranging from 600 to 1,200 francs a year, was promoted in 1699 to a salary of 3,000 francs per annum, perhaps in recognition of his services in the design of the chapel, and this was followed later by his appointment as "architecte du Roi."

In 1699 Pierre Thevenot and Jacques Mazière began the building of the last chapel of Versailles. The detail drawings must have been already completed, for in that year Jouvenet, the sculptor of the capitals of the church of the Dome at the Invalides, was paid 350 francs for models of the capitals for the chapel at Versailles,<sup>1</sup> and in 1701 Caillard and Noel, sculptors, were also paid 2,265 francs for models of capitals. There is mention of payment for a model of the chapel, and it is evident from further entries in the "Comptes" that very complete models were made, not only of the building as a whole, but of every important detail.<sup>2</sup> Mansart himself, fully occupied as he was with maintaining his position at the Court, must have left these things almost entirely to his staff. There were, as usual, many accidents in the building. In 1700 compensation (60 francs) is paid to the widow of a workman killed in the building, and to others who were injured in 1701; and in 1705, a workman in the Chapel fell a height of 55 feet and received 60 francs in consideration of his having been twice trepanned.<sup>3</sup>

The building of the Chapel proceeded in a leisurely way. The masonry alone occupied more than five years, and it was not till 1704<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Comptes," iv, 449, 709.

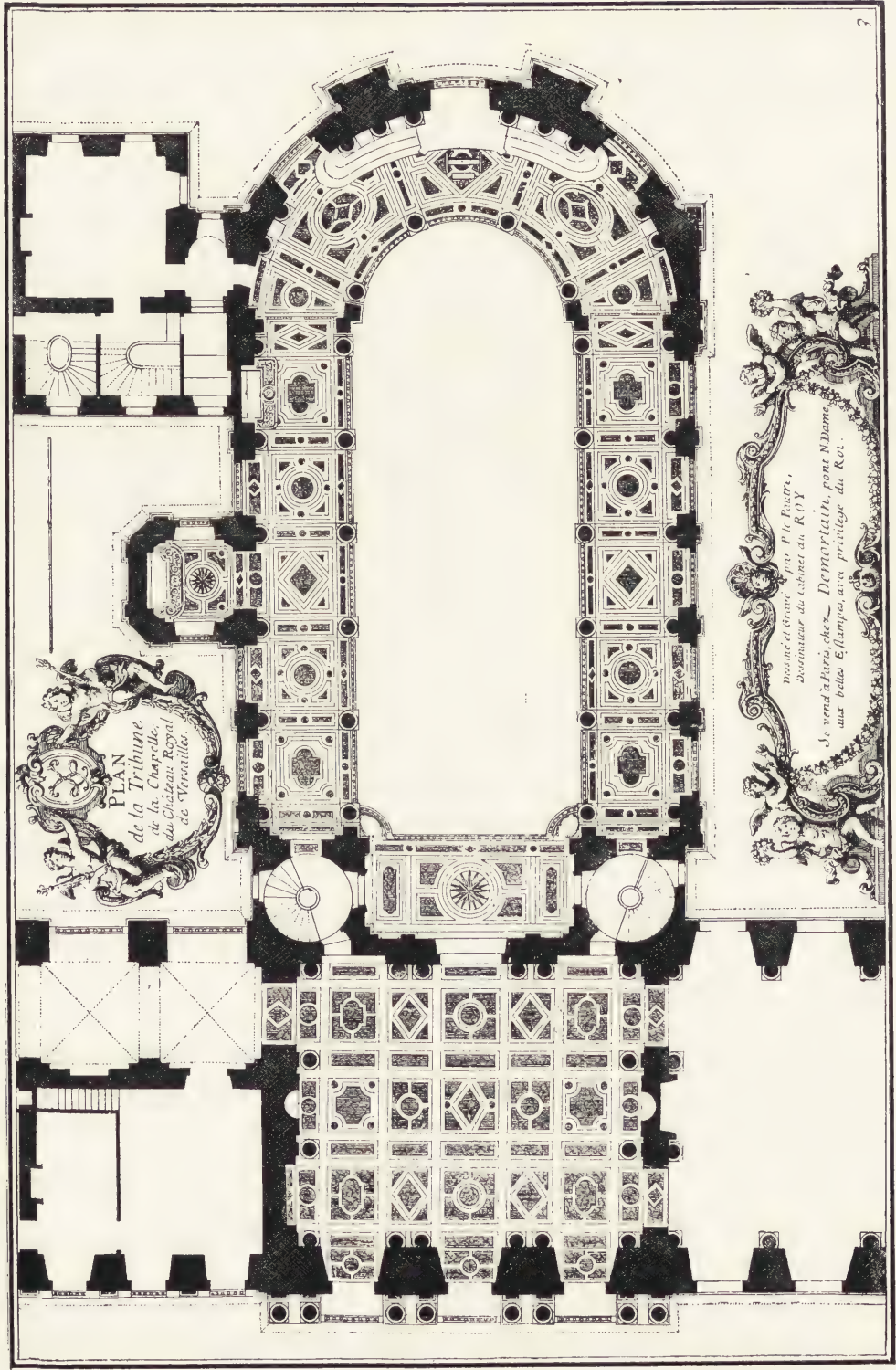
<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iv, 449.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, iv, 1240, the usual "gratification" for injuries such as a broken leg was 30 francs. Though the supervision was careless, the employers' liability was recognized in a way. The King was humane and not intentionally unjust, and there are many entries in the "Comptes" of compensations and of payments for little plots of land to small owners at Versailles, Marly and elsewhere, which disprove the idea that Louis XIV was a merely arbitrary despot. In the same account is an entry of payments to the messenger who brought the Royal orders to Mansart in his château at Sagonne beyond Bourges. In 1705 Mansart was about the most powerful person in the court of Louis XIV.

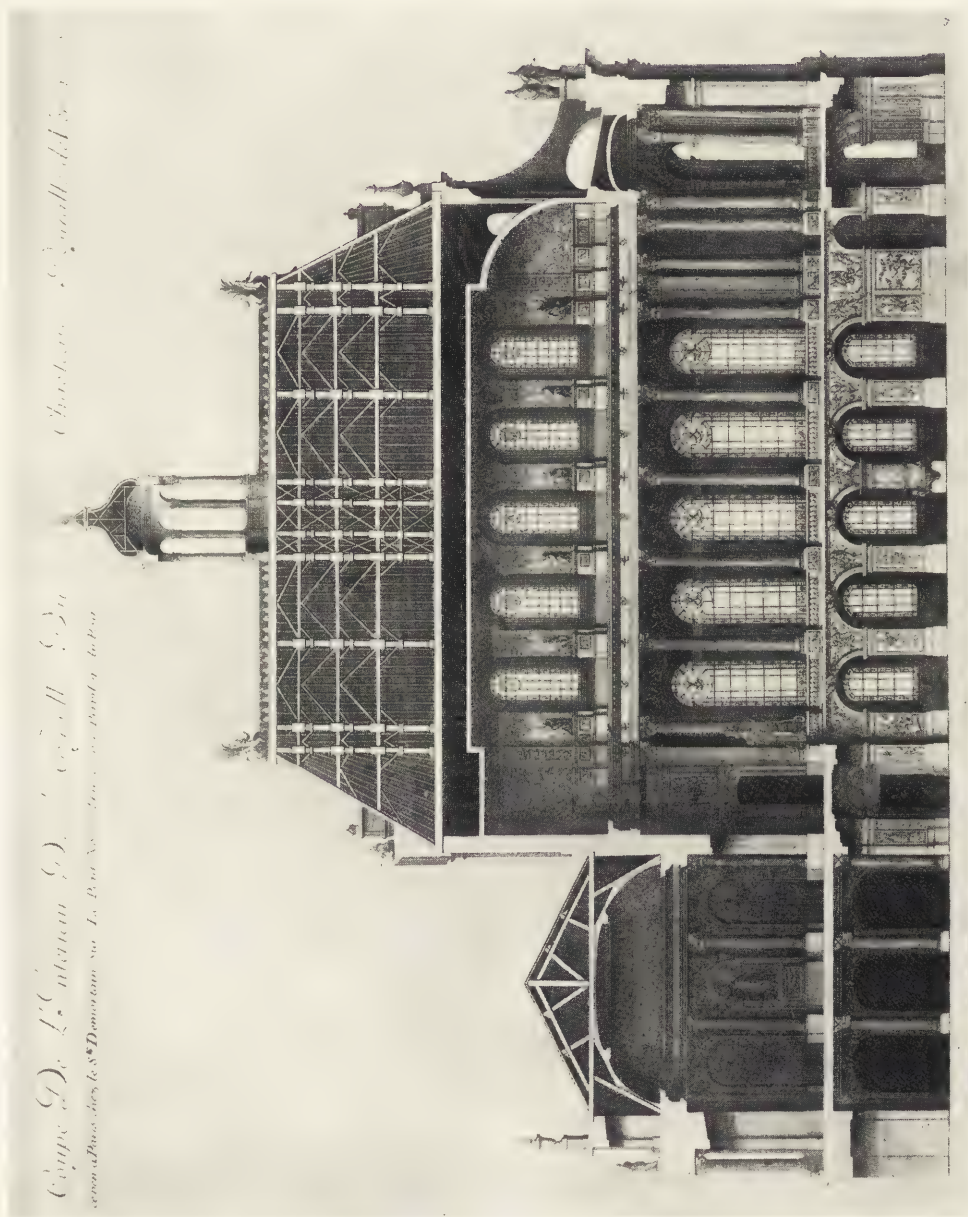
<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, iv, 1043, 1048-49.







VERSAILLES. PLAN OF THE CHAPEL ABOVE THE GALLERY, 1714 (see p. 211)



VERSAILLES. LONG SECTION THROUGH THE CHAPEL, 1714 (see p. 211)





*La collation, pour le dîner,  
est donnée dans une grande salle à manger.*

ST. CYR. BUILT FOR MME. DE MAINTENON. J. H. MANSART (p. 211)

*Oratoire*



that the sculptors were at work on the details of the grand cornice of the interior and on the capitals and gargoyles of the exterior. After Mansart's death in 1708 the work was completed under Robert de Cotte and finally consecrated in 1710.<sup>1</sup>

The Chapel at Versailles, in spite of its great effort, is an unsatisfactory building. The first idea had been to build it in marble, but the King, who feared this would make it damp and cold, insisted on stone being used instead. The King's apartments were on the first floor, and the whole scheme of the Chapel was subordinated to his convenience of access. The result is that all the part below the gallery is out of relation to the rest of the interior. The principal point of view is not on the floor of the Chapel, but on the gallery floor, and the proportions were designed from this standpoint. As a consequence of this the Chapel is far too high for the proportions of what purports to be a classical building, and the effect from the gallery is as if the floor of the Chapel had been removed and one was looking down into a lower chamber. In spite of its profuse and exquisite detail the interior is unsatisfactory. There is no suggestion about it of religious feeling; indeed, it leaves in the mind the impression of some curious nightmare theatre. Even Mansart seems to have had misgivings as to the effect, for early in 1689 he consulted the Academy on the proportions of the proposed Chapel, more particularly the height, which was to be 4 feet more than twice the width of the nave, "a cause de la suggestion qui lui donne le rez-de chaussé et l'estage de l'appartement du Roi."<sup>2</sup> Saint-Simon said that Mansart deliberately made this Chapel tower above the roofs of the adjacent buildings<sup>3</sup> in order to force the King to add another storey to the whole of the palace, and that had it not been for the war this would actually have been done.

Mansart's other works included S. Cyr, a plain, unpretentious building for Mdme. de Maintenon, about a mile and a half to the northwest of Versailles,<sup>4</sup> the Châteaux of Vauvres, Luneville, Dampierre, the Archbishop's palace at Rouen, the Hôtel de Lorge (rue Neuve S. Augustin, Paris), his own house, No. 28 Rue des Tournelles, a house for M. Fieubert in Paris, the parish church of Versailles, and other

<sup>1</sup> "Comptes," iv, 1156. The lead covering to the roof was not paid for till 1715.

<sup>2</sup> "Procès-Verbaux Acad. Royale d'Arch.," ii, 179. Blondel, "Arch. Franc.," gives the dimensions of the chapel as—length 133 feet, width 70 feet, height 78 feet. The Academy duly approved Mansart's proposal.

<sup>3</sup> "Il fit exprès cet horrible exhaussement par dessus le château."

<sup>4</sup> Converted into a school for officers by Napoleon.



buildings, none of them of pre-eminent interest. Dampierre is the most attractive, and is a fine example of a great French nobleman's country house in the time of Louis XIV. In 1665 the property of Dampierre passed into the possession of Albert de Luynes, and he, between 1670 and 1680, demolished the earlier château of the Ducs de Lorraine, and called in Mansart to design the building which now exists. Le Nôtre laid out the gardens. The planning of these great houses was still utterly inconvenient, but there can be no doubt that the numerous out-buildings, the stables, offices, and the like, leading up to the château itself, gave a chance for fine architectural composition, of which the architects of Louis XIV made the most. In the broad, simple setting given them by the genius of Le Nôtre they are characteristic examples of French domestic architecture at its best, and there is perhaps no happier example of its kind than Dampierre.<sup>1</sup>

Louvois died in 1691, and was succeeded in the *Surintendance* by Colbert de Villacerf at an aggregate salary of 27,200 francs, Mansart succeeding Villacerf as Inspector-General of Buildings at a salary of 16,000 francs. In 1693 he was made a Chevalier of S. Michael, and finally, on the resignation of Colbert de Villacerf in 1699,<sup>2</sup> he stepped into his place as *Surintendant*, an office that had been filled by Louvois and Colbert himself. It is stated in the journal of the Marquis de Dangeau that "il avoit 52,000 francs d'appointements et il avoit gardé la charge de premier architecte qui lui en valoit 18,000, outre cela il avoit une infinité de commodités et disposoit de beaucoup d'emplois." Moreover, the office brought him into close contact with the King. In Dangeau's journal there are constant entries, such as the following: "1701. Le Roi travaille longtemps après dîner à Marly avec Mansart," and it was this intimate personal relationship with the King, together with his extremely familiar manners, that roused the enmity of aristocrats of the old school, such as the Duc de Saint-Simon. Dangeau, writing in this year (1701) (vii, 6), says the post of *Surintendant*: "Donne un fort grand commerce avec le Roi et beaucoup d'occasions de faire plaisir aux courtisans dans toutes les maisons royales." It was

<sup>1</sup> Dampierre is about half-way between Versailles and Rambouillet. D'Argenville, "Vies," p. 367, says: "Au château de Dampierre près Chevreuse Hardouin a élevé sur les côtes de la seconde cour deux galeries détachées du cour du château et ornées de portiques."

<sup>2</sup> Early in 1699 Villacerf discovered that his principal commis had disappeared carrying off with him large sums set aside for building. Villacerf, a man of scrupulous honour, was so disgusted that he resigned, and Mansart was appointed his successor. Villacerf, who was a cousin of Louvois, was highly esteemed by the King. "C'était un homme brusque, mais franc, vrai, droit, serviable, et très bon ami."—Saint-Simon.

this office that made Mansart such an important person at the French Court. Moreover, the King let it be understood that if his courtiers wished to please him they could not do better than employ Mansart. His full title was "Surintendant et ordonnateur de ses bâtiments et ses jardins aussi que des arts et manufactures royales avec la direction des académies de peinture et de sculpture, et de celle qui a été établie à Rome par S.M." The King kept Mansart in suspense for a night, and apologized next morning for having done so, and Mansart was so delighted that he distributed 400 pistoles to the attendants on taking the oath of appointment.

Saint-Simon says that Mansart's place was worth 50,000<sup>1</sup> crowns a year, and that on his death 3,000,000 francs were offered the King for the appointment. It was finally given to D'Antin, a famous gambler, who became an excellent administrator, and Saint-Simon adds, bitterly, it was a pleasing thought that a nobleman should have reason to reckon his fortune made on succeeding to the leavings of an "apprentice mason," even though those leavings were cut down by one-third in title, power and appointments. There is probably no example in history of a more consistently successful career than that of Jules Hardouin Mansart. Dangeau gives a characteristic episode. In 1700 Mansart was sent by the King to advise the Duc de Lorraine on his house and gardens at Nancy. For this he declined to take any fee till ordered to do so by the King, whereupon the Duke sent him a diamond worth 1,000 pistoles and "une belle calèche" with eight horses. In this year Mansart married his son to the daughter of Samuel Bernard, the banker, who put down a dowry of 400,000 francs in cash, the King presenting

<sup>1</sup> The "Comptes" show that in 1699 Mansart was receiving in salary a total of 60,886 francs (say £12,000 a year, pre-war values), made up as follows:

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 1. As Conseiller du Roy Intendant et Ordonnateur alternatif                                      | 1,686 francs. |
| 2. As Premier Architecte du Roi  | 10,000 „      |
| 3. As Surintendant et Ordonnateur-General des Bâtiments,<br>jardins arts et manufactures de S.M. | 49,200 „      |

In the latter office in consolidated pay Colbert had drawn a salary of 15,000 francs a year (1668), Louvois of 17,400 (1683) and Colbert de Villacerf of 21,000 (1691). In Colbert's time and the first few years of Louvois' office there had been no financial stringency, certainly nothing approaching what prevailed when Mansart was drawing this enormous salary, nearly one-third more than the total income left to Mme. de Maintenon by Louis XIV. In addition to this there should be reckoned his perquisites and commissions. All the entries in the "Comptes" of salaries to the Surintendants begin "à nous," so that it appears that they paid themselves their own salaries out of the sums allocated to the Royal buildings. It was suggested that only the sudden death of Mansart saved him from a prosecution for embezzlement that might have cost him his life.



Mansart with 100,000 francs to buy his son the post of Conseiller d'État.<sup>1</sup> Everything went well with him almost to the very last day of his life.

Mansart died quite suddenly in 1708. Saint-Simon says either from over-eating the King's dishes, or, as some suggested, poisoned by the financiers who farmed the State posting-service. These men made immense profits, and Mansart had decided to inform the King, and had even obtained his permission to make a large sum of money out of it himself if he made good his case. The tax farmers offered him 40,000 livres a year to stay proceedings, which Mansart declined, but Saint-Simon says it is quite certain that a few days before his death the King had pressed Mansart hard for payments on account of buildings, that Mansart had gone to Desmarets, the Treasurer, to obtain the money, but that the latter had declined to make any advance till Mansart had given a full account of the last sums of money entrusted to him for buildings, amounting to some 400,000 to 500,000 livres. Mansart maintained that he was only accountable to himself, a view which the Treasurer declined to accept. Mansart thereupon complained to the King, but the King supported Desmarets, and would not listen to Mansart's explanation. It was thought that the shock of this rebuff killed him. The King at once ordered all his papers to be sealed up, but after close examination nothing was found "*qui ternit la memoire de Mansart.*"<sup>2</sup> Even Saint-Simon admits that he was "*obligeant et serviable,*" and knew his business as an official. What Saint-Simon could not forget was his low origin, his astounding success, and the vulgar familiarity with which he permitted himself to slap the princes of the blood on the back. It seemed to Saint-Simon an intolerable insult to the aristocracy that Mansart should have been made a governor of two of the Royal bastards, should have the privilege of private entry to the King, and that this "*maçon,*" as Saint-Simon delights to call him, "*cet gros homme bien fait, d'un visage agréable, et de la lie du peuple,*" should have been ennobled and become one of the most powerful men at the Court of Louis XIV.

Saint-Simon was a shrewd if very severe critic, though he was

<sup>1</sup> In 1709 Dangeau notes "*le Comte de Sagonne, fils de feu M. Mansart, vend sa charge de maître des requêtes, se met aux mousquetaires, achète un regiment et quitte la plume pour l'épée. C'est une verité et non un conte pour rire.*"

<sup>2</sup> Saint-Simon. Another story is told of a missing Royal warrant for 50,000 francs, stolen from Mansart by his mistress, and laid before the King by his enemies, but in this case Mansart's explanation was so convincing that the King fell on his neck and presented him with double the amount.

careless as to exact accuracy. He tells a good story of Mansart's bridge building. Mansart had designed a bridge at Moulins of which he was very proud. M. Charlus, the Governor of the province, having appeared at Court shortly afterwards, the King, at Mansart's instigation, asked him about this bridge. M. Charlus replied, "Sire, I have no news of it since it broke away, but I believe it is now at Nantes." Dangeau, however, in his journal says that the bridge was carried away in the floods of November, 1710, two years after the death of Mansart. Saint-Simon says that the same thing happened with the bridge at Blois, also built from Mansart's designs.<sup>1</sup>

Mansart's relations with the Academy of Architecture are interesting. He was thrust in by Colbert when quite a young man, and attended their séances with all humility, consulting them on all sorts of technical points, and indeed there is reason to think that Colbert instructed the Academy to keep an eye on the practical work of this pleasant and pushful young man, whose real attainments did not entirely convince so shrewd a judge as Colbert. In 1684 the specification for the masonry at Versailles was read by the Academy prior to an interview with the contractors, and it appears that the Academy satisfied itself that the specification was in order and took on itself to deal with the contractors.<sup>2</sup> Mansart justified his design for the Chapel of Versailles to the Academy, and consulted them as to the construction of the dome of the Invalides, and it is then a question of the

<sup>1</sup> The bridge at Moulins had always been a difficult problem. Mansart's bridge was the second, if not the third, bridge that was built and swept away at Moulins in twenty-five years. The minutes of the Academy of Architecture for July 1704 record that M. le Surintendant (Mansart) honoured the company with his presence, and addressed them on the subject of bridges, more particularly with regard to the new bridge he had designed for Moulins, to be built on piles without caissons in three arches, the centre arch of a span of 141 feet, and the two smaller ones of 105 feet, and the piers 36 feet wide ("Procès-Verbaux de l'Acad. d'Arch.," iii, 200, 265-6). The dimensions seem prodigious for the time, and show that Mansart had no real knowledge of construction. He hit upon a grandiose idea which undoubtedly made a sensation. How it was to be carried out he left to the contractor and the clerk of the works at Moulins. Various ingenious devices were employed in the construction. M. le Maistre in 1708 explained to the Academy how in order to prevent the sand working away round the base of the piers he had sunk boats full of stones round the piers "ce que la compagnie a fort approuvé." Notwithstanding, the whole construction was swept away two years later. The existing bridge of thirteen arches was constructed in 1750 by M. de Regemortes, "premier ingénieur des turcies et levées."

<sup>2</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," ii, 63. M. Lemonnier says: "C'est à noter que l'académie intervint au moins au début, dans les parties techniques de la construction, et que Mansart se reposait sur elle de certaines questions pratiques."



company's approval. But after 1699 the relationship was changed entirely. On 12 January 1699 the Academy was informed that Mansart had been appointed by the King "Surintendant de ses bastiments et jardins arts et manufactures de France," and it thereupon decided to go to Versailles next morning "pour luy demander l'honneur de sa protection." In February the *Surintendant* met the Academy in full state, and announced to them its reconstitution in two classes, viz.: seven architects, a professor and a secretary of the first class and seven other architects forming a second class, with a right to take part in the conferences.<sup>1</sup> Henceforward it is for the *Surintendant* to graciously condescend to visit the Academy, but it must be admitted that Mansart loyally paid his debt to that body. He made it his first business to reorganize the Academy and get its privileges confirmed, and for the rest of his life he took a more active part in its proceedings than he had for years before. There is no doubt that Mansart rendered considerable service to the Academy, and on his death in 1708 that body recorded its regret on the Minutes: "Il avoit esté de cette Académie des que le Roi le choisit pour sur premier architecte. Il l'a toujours favorisée de sa bienveillance, et plusieurs fois de sa présence, depuis qu'il a esté revestu de la charge de Surintendant." Mansart seems to have exerted himself strenuously for the Academy, but the hopeless state of the finances resulting from the war of the Spanish succession, rendered the position both of the Academy of Architecture and the Academy at Rome extremely precarious, and Mansart was too closely occupied with his own interests to take serious risks in the interest of others. A resolute and relentless pursuit of his own advancement was the key to his career. He had tacked himself on to the great François Mansart, and, being a very able man, made the most of his family connections. The Hardouins, the Gabriels, immediately connected with the royal buildings, were his kinsmen. De Cotte was his brother-in-law, and helped him largely in his building speculations, and this expert body of professional men united by interest as well as by family ties, gradually

<sup>1</sup> "Procès-Verbaux de l'Acad. d'Arch.," iii, 56, 58, 63. The second class corresponded to the Associate class in our Royal Academy. In May 1699 the official lists were issued.

First class: De Cotte, Bullet, De L'Isle, Gabriel, Gobert, Lambert, Le Maistre, De La Hire, Professor, Félibien, Secretary.

Second class (increased to ten): L'Assurance, de L'Espine, Mathieu, Desgodetz, Le Maistre (le Jeune), Bullet le fils, Bruant (le Jeune), Cochery, Gittard. The strong family connection and tradition will be noted. Two Academicians, Le Maistre and Bullet, have their sons in the second class, and Bruant and Gittard in the second class were both sons of deceased Academicians.

got into their own hands the monopoly of all the work worth doing in and about Paris from 1676 down to the date of Mansart's death. Daviler, one of the ablest of Mansart's assistants, found the prospect of breaking out of the ring so hopeless that he left Paris altogether.

It is not easy to arrive at a just estimate of Jules Hardouin Mansart, both as a man and as an artist. During his lifetime he was too powerful to be attacked with impunity. Dangeau refers to him dispassionately, but Dangeau was a methodical note-taker of little judgment. Saint-Simon, brilliant and caustic, but clearly prejudiced, hated Mansart and despised him, and wrote him down as an adventurer and an impostor, though he admitted that nothing was found in Mansart's papers dishonourable to his memory. On the other hand, the Abbé Lambert, in his "*Histoire Littéraire du règne de Louis XIV*" (1751) maintained that there was a cabal at court "pour perdre ce grand homme dans l'esprit du Roi," but what might have appeared to Mansart's admirers to be a cabal, might have appeared to his enemies to be an honest attempt to rescue the King from the influence of a rogue. On the facts of his life, so far as they are known to us, he appears to me to have been a very astute and ambitious man, intent on making the most he could out of the circumstances and the people among whom he found himself. Good-natured enough where a service cost him little, he became hard and unscrupulous when it stood in the way of his own interest. He left La Teulière in the lurch in Rome, he stole an advantage over Le Nôtre during his absence in Italy, and he superseded his old master, Bruant, at the Invalides, and in the Place Vendôme; no doubt he made the usual excuse that he badly wanted the money for himself and his family, oblivious of the fact that others also have families. But these were the acts of a man without a fine natural sense of honour and chivalry, and throughout his career Mansart showed himself incapable of friendship, because other men were to him only so many stepping-stones in his career.

In regard to his merits as an artist, Saint-Simon had no doubts at all. In his opinion Mansart had none, "Il étoit ignorant dans son métier," "le surintendant peu capable," and he says in plain terms that Mansart's designs were made by other people. As against this the only contemporary testimony that I can find is a passage in the "*Mercur de Paris*" for September, 1706 (the date of the opening of the church of the Invalides), which says: "Il n'a point rencheri sur les idées des autres. Il n'a jamais suivi d'autres idées que les siennes. Il est original dans tous ses ouvrages. Et il est né pour être imité et pour n'imiter



personne." There is also the wording of the royal warrant for January 1699, appointing him *Surintendant*: "vous avez donné des preuves suffisantes de la connaissance parfaite que vous avez eue dès votre jeunesse, dans les arts, et de l'expérience que vous estes acquise dans l'architecture, par le grand nombre de beaux ouvrages que vous avez conduits par nos ordres. . . . Ce que vous a rendu le plus capable et le plus intelligent de tous ceux que nous avons employés pour nos bâtiments, et vous a fait rechercher pour tout ce qui a été entrepris de plus grand en ce genre dans notre royaume."<sup>1</sup> The wording of royal warrants, as I have noted before in the case of the warrant appointing Primaticcio to a somewhat similar post, was always calculated to cover up any particularly gross piece of jobbery.

Germain Brice, by no means a bad judge, held a contrary opinion of Jules Hardouin Mansart. His manner of design, he said, only pleased those who had no knowledge of the rules of the art. He was great on the planning of rooms and in carrying the work through as quickly as possible, "sans se mettre en peine de la bonne construction ni du reste." Being profoundly impressed with his own capacity, he claimed that his mere caprices should be accepted, although they violated the rules of good architecture.<sup>2</sup> But according to Brice, Mansart's reputation was by no means universally admitted even in his own lifetime. In 1699 Mansart made a design for the new high altar which Louis XIV was presenting to Notre Dame, and the work was actually begun. But Mansart's model was so seriously criticized, "a cause de quantité de choquantes défauts qui s'y trouvoient," that the works were suspended altogether till after Mansart's death, when it was resumed and completed by De Cotte.

In the Introduction to the fourth volume of his "Cours d'Architecture," J. F. Blondel has a curious classification of architects into three classes: (1) "L'Homme à talent," such as Pierre Lascot at the Louvre, De L'Orme at the Tuileries, and François Mansart at Maisons and Blois; (2) "L'Homme de goût," such as François Blondel at the Porte S. Denis, and Claude Perrault at the Louvre; and (3) "L'Homme de génie," and of the last he says: "Jules Hardouin Mansart par exemple étoit un de ces hommes privilégiés on peut même dire qu'il n'a guères

<sup>1</sup> The text is given in full in M. Lemonnier's Introduction, p. xiv, note 3, "Procès-Verbaux de l'Acad. de l'Arch. Royale." The wording was an advertisement of Mansart's professional qualities, and seems to have been drafted expressly to meet a widespread scepticism as to his capacity.

<sup>2</sup> "Desc. de la Ville de Paris," ed. 1725, ii, 319.

laissé d'héritiers de son génie. . . . La France, il n'en faut point douter, est infiniment redévable à cet architecte, car sans parler du château de Clagny, son coup d'essai, ni de tout ce qu'il a produit d'admirable à Versailles et ailleurs, le Dôme des Invalides seul fait autant d'honneur à cet homme inimitable qu'au siècle qui l'a vu naître." Blondel goes on to say that he considered Boffrand most nearly approached him in genius—an architect, by the way, as much over-rated as Jules Hardouin himself. Blondel's enthusiasm for J. H. Mansart in the above passage is unintelligible in regard to his teaching generally. The example that he habitually held up to his pupils of all that was most admirable in architecture was not J. H. Mansart, but François Mansart, the scholar, the artist, and the independent. At the time he made these remarks, Blondel was tilting at Meisssonier and Oppenord, and he may have been induced to reckon J. H. Mansart among the angels in order to point the moral against the fashionable decorators of the time. Yet a few years before a far keener judge pronounced Versailles "un chef-d'œuvre de mauvais goût et de magnificence."<sup>1</sup> That J. H. Mansart was a man of much natural ability there can be no doubt, ready of invention, quick to seize opportunities. As a man of affairs he must have been extremely able and adroit, but as an artist, in my opinion, there is no comparison between Jules Hardouin Mansart and François Mansart. François was a great architect, an admirable planner, gifted with an inimitable sense of proportion, and a rare grasp of all that is distinguished in architectural design. The little individuality that one can find in Jules Hardouin's work, apart from the exquisite detail of his craftsmen, is thin and commonplace. His originality was of the cheapest; it may have been his misfortune that the master for whom he worked throughout the whole of his career was an inordinately conceited and ignorant amateur, but Hardouin Mansart found it easier to swim with the tide than to make any attempt to turn it. He was, I think, a most capable but unscrupulous man, a bad artist, and perhaps the most conspicuous example of the architect *entrepreneur*, of the man whose heart was set not on great architecture, but on a great position and a lucrative practice.

<sup>1</sup> Voltaire, "Le Temple du Goût," p. 48.



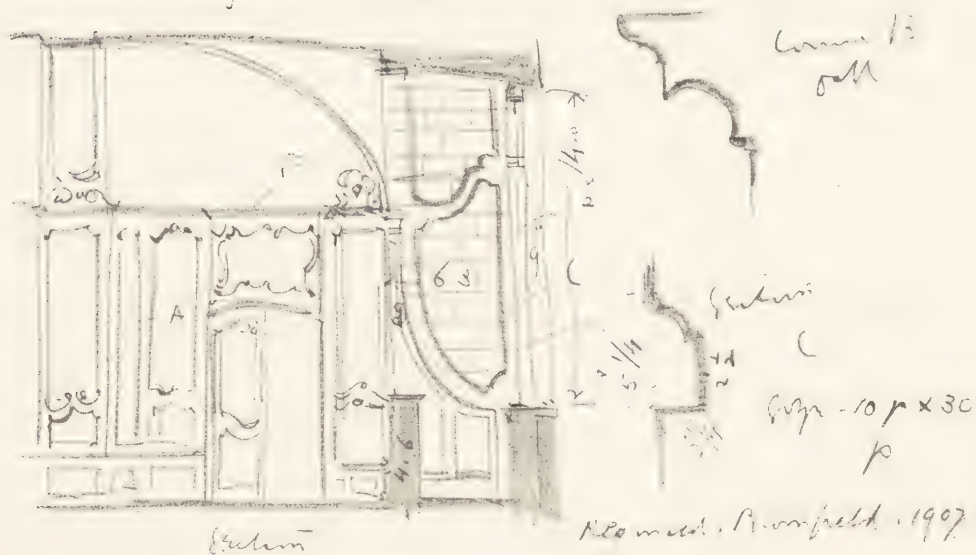








*The Dining Hall "lycée" malherbe. Caen.*



DINING HALL, LYCÉE MALHERBE, CAEN  
(FROM A DRAWING BY REGINALD BLOMFIELD)

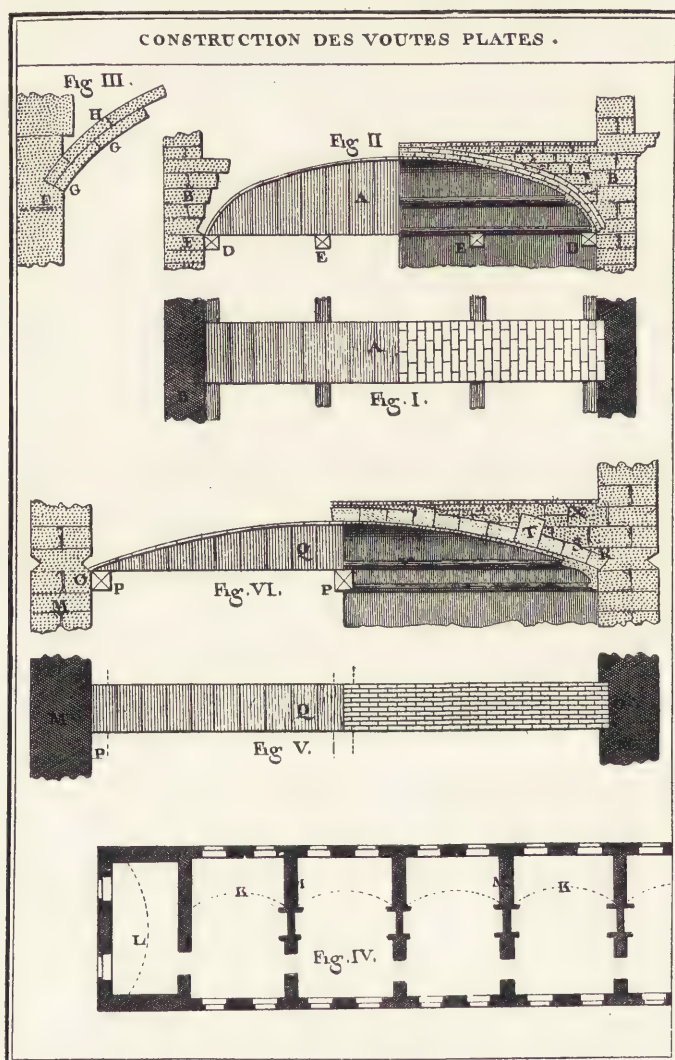


DIAGRAM OF METHOD OF CONSTRUCTING VAULTING À LA ROUSSILLON  
(J. F. BLONDEL, "COURS D'ARCHITECTURE," IX, PL. XXXIV)





## APPENDIX

### ON THE FLAT VAULTING OF THE ROUSSILLON

**I**N his account of Pierre Mignard, Dezallier D'Argenville gives a note on Jean Baptiste Franque, born at Villeneuve les Avignon in 1683. Franque was the architect of the Seminary at Bourges referred to by J. F. Blondel and enjoyed a considerable reputation in his time.<sup>1</sup> He was particularly noted for his skill in masonry construction. "Il a osé le premier faire des grands escaliers suspendus d'une légèreté et d'une hardiesse surprenantes, dont les marches portent les plate bandes, lesquelles n'ont que huit à neuf pouces d'épaisseur, et a la règle par dessous. Les voutes construites sur ses dessins, sont presque aussi plates que des plafonds." Instances of these marvellous stone flying staircases of the eighteenth century are to be found in the Hôtel Dieu at Laon, the Lycée at Caen, the Hôtel de Ville at Nancy, and elsewhere. They are in some ways the most remarkable feats of exact and scientific masonry to be found in the whole history of building construction. Examples of the very flat vaultings referred to by D'Argenville are to be found in the vestibule of the Prefecture at Bordeaux (Ancien Hôtel Saige) by Victor Louis, where it takes the form of a flat saucer dome, and in the vestibule of the theatre, where it is actually a flat stone ceiling. Mansart in July, 1684,<sup>2</sup> informed the Academy of a vault constructed in the vestibule of the Hôtel de Ville at Arles, about 42 feet in diameter, with a rise of only 5 feet. This was

<sup>1</sup> See Blondel, "Cours d'Architecture," iii, 143. A Franque, either Jean Baptiste or his son, became a member of the Academy of Architecture in 1755. The son of J. B. Franque was a pensionary in the French Academy in Rome 1733-36. In 1736 Wleughels, the Director, wrote to D'Antin: "Il y à ici un nommé Franc, architecte, qui demande à se retirer: il souhaite retourner en France où il doit faire de grands ouvrages" ("Corres. des Directeurs," ix, 270). In 1730 Pierre Mignard, architect of Avignon, wrote to J. B. Franque, architect at Avignon from the French Academy at Rome, an enthusiastic letter on the work of J. Bouchardon and Adam, then students in the school. "Je vous assure que nos sculpteurs (at Avignon) ne seroient bon que pour dégrossir auprès de ces deux messieurs là" ("Correspondance," viii, 137). Franque of Avignon designed the "Hôtel des Receveurs des Tailles" at Viviers in 1740.

<sup>2</sup> "Procès-Verbaux," ii, 597.



built by "un compagnon passant venant d'Italie."<sup>1</sup> De Brosses, when passing through Avignon in 1739, noted in the sacristy in the church of the Novitiate of the Jesuits, "une voûte hardie, tout a fait plate construite de pierres de taille, dont aucune n'est semblable a l'autre pour la coupe."<sup>2</sup> At the Hôtel de Matignon, Courtonne constructed an oval vault to the vestibule 24 feet by 21 feet, with a rise of only 16 inches, and there are fine examples in the chapel and refectory of the Lycée Malherbe at Caen. Patte refers to this method of vaulting as in use in the Roussillon district for the vaulting of churches, dormitories, and the like from time immemorial, and he describes it as the construction of floors "en briques." It was used, he said, in the Abbaye Royale of Panthemont, in the Treasury of Notre Dame, and in the Bureaux de la guerre et des affaires étrangères at Versailles. In these latter buildings five such floors were constructed, one above the other, an early form of fire-resisting construction.<sup>3</sup> Blondel, or rather Patte, in chap. ii of vol. vi of Blondel's "Cours d'Architecture," discusses this Roussillon system at length. It had, he says, been generally adopted by modern architects some thirty-five years ago (about 1740). The peculiarity of this system of vaulting was that it could be built with walls of ordinary thickness, but from want of knowledge several attempts to apply it in Paris had been disastrous. The first successful attempt was made at Bisy, near Vernon on the Seine, by the Maréchal de Belisle, who brought the workmen from the Roussillon. The building to be covered was a stable 120 feet long by 30 feet wide, and the total rise allowed the vault, which was elliptical in section, was 6 feet.<sup>4</sup> The walls were  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet thick, and were allowed to stand for a year before the vault was built. The vault was only  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches thick in the crown, including the tile paving over it, and was formed with hard bricks 8 inches by  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches by 1 inch thick laid flat in plaster and breaking joint, the object of using plaster instead of mortar being to make the whole vault homogeneous, both in strength and bearing, and plaster being quick-setting was more suitable for this purpose than lime mortar. The method was as follows: A chase was formed in the two walls to receive the springing of the vaulting, and a movable wooden centre constructed to the full section

<sup>1</sup> "Lettres Familières," i, 13.

<sup>2</sup> "Monuments erigés," etc., p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> The Comte d'Espié, who applied this form of barrel vault bearing on two walls to vaults "en imperiale," bearing on all four walls of the room, brought out a pamphlet on his method, entitled "Manière de rendre toutes sortes d'édifices incombustibles." The Count's experiment in the Ecole Militaire was a failure, for owing to his not having allowed for the expansion of the plaster, his vaults thrust out the walls.

<sup>4</sup> In other vaults the rise was only one-twelfth of the span.

of the arch, and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet wide. This centre was to be movable on bearers D.D. and E.E. running the length of the building. The men worked in pairs, one at each end of the centering, and starting from the chases on either side laid the bricks flat in longitudinal courses till they met in the centre, the joints between each brick were carefully plastered and each brick tapped home with the hammer. A second layer of bricks was then placed in a similar manner above the first. The first  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet being completed and set, the centering was moved along the bearers to take the next length, and so to the end. The haunches were filled in with rubble, the top levelled up for the tile floor, and the underside thinly coated with plaster. No iron ties were used, yet the vault was so strong that it stood the test of a stone weighing some  $3\frac{1}{2}$  tons<sup>1</sup> being dropped on the crown, which only made a hole without any injury to the rest of the vault. Patte describes variations of the Roussillon system used at Versailles and in Languedoc. In the latter the vault was four-sided, bearing on all four walls, with a rise of from one-eighth to one-third of the width. Light centering over the whole space was necessary, and walls were to be left for at least six months before any attempt was made to construct the vaulting. Each course of bricks in the vaulting must be completed before another is begun, "*afin que les quatres rangs s'avancent également vers le sommet F. de la voute.*" Flat vaults, "*à l'imperiale,*" were extensively used, instead of wooden floors, in houses at Lyons about the middle of the eighteenth century. They were found, Patte says, to cost no more, and to last much longer. They were usually constructed by Italians or Provençal plasterers, and on walls from 18 inches to 20 inches thick.<sup>2</sup> The bricks they used came from Verdun, and measured 10 inches to 11 inches by 5 inches and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches thick. Owing to the absorbent quality of the plaster, it was essential that all the work was done under cover, *i.e.*, after the roof was on. These vaults, "*à l'imperiale,*" in addition to partial fillings above the haunches, were strengthened by buttresses, formed of half brick walls about 3 feet apart, running from the extrados of the vaults to the outer walls. The rise of these vaults varied from one-sixth to one-twelfth of their span, but the latter was considered risky. Another form of flat vaulting was used at the Palais Bourbon, the arch on each side being a segment of a circle with a rise of one-twelfth the span; and the

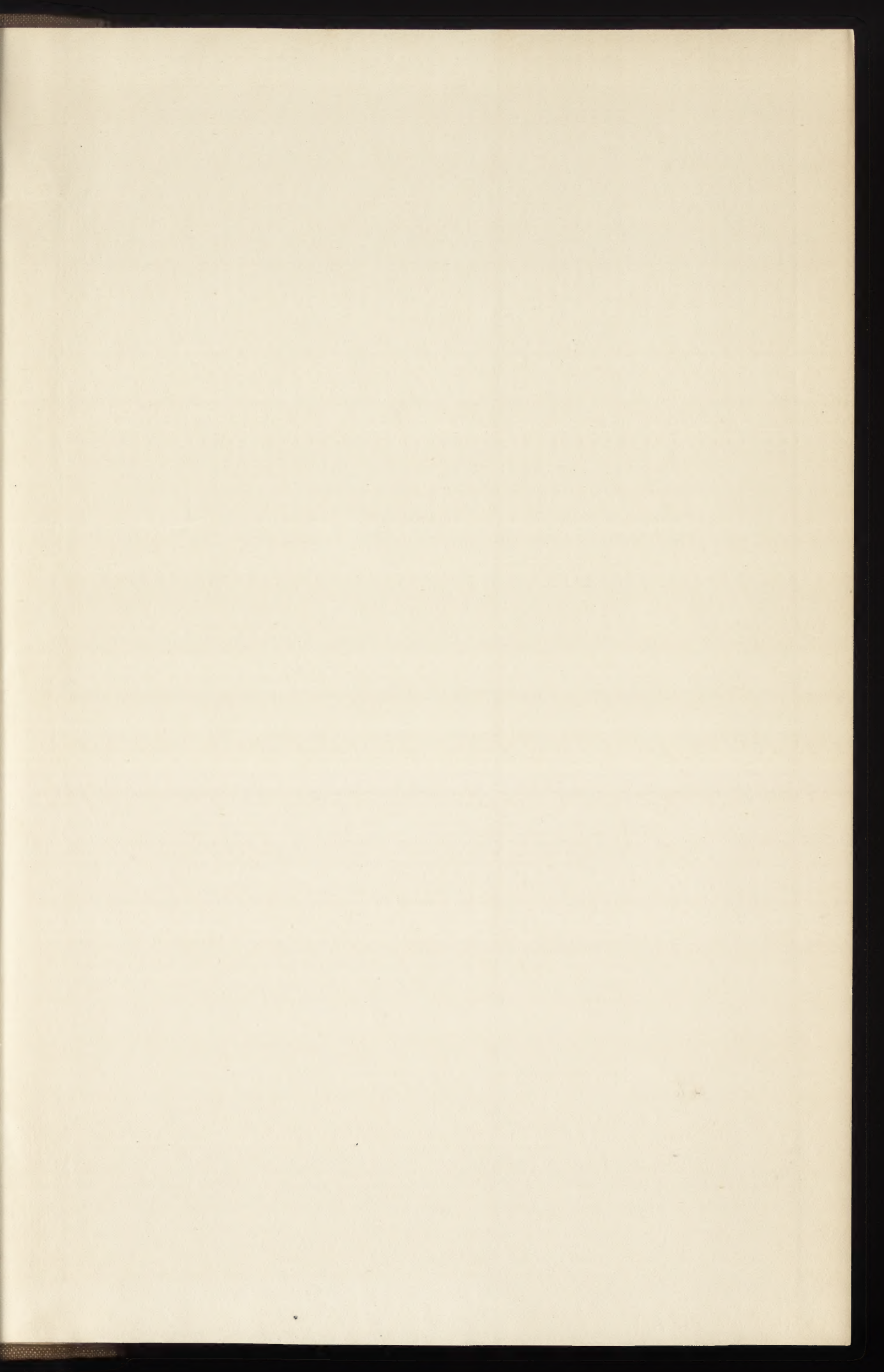
<sup>1</sup> Blondel, "*une pierre pesant 7 à 8 milliers qui n'y avoit fait que son trou sans aucunement endommager le reste*" ("*Cours d'Architecture,*" vi, 89).

<sup>2</sup> Patte mentions the vaulting of a hall in the Abbey of La Seauve dans le Velay 29 feet wide with a rise of 7 feet, and walls 3 feet thick,



vaulting was formed with square bricks, 8 inches by 8 inches by 1 inch thick laid diagonally on light centering and doubled. This floor was tested in the presence of members of the Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Architecture, and withstood some immense weights, though, according to Patte, the test was fallacious. The strong, scientific bent of these experiments in building is remarkable. It forms the counterpart, less in evidence, perhaps, because less easily handled, to that minute study of the orders to which both the Blondels devoted such infinite attention. The one was as traditional as the other in France since the days of De L'Orme. On almost every page of the "Procès-Verbaux" of the Academy of Architecture one comes across traces of these two aspects of French architecture, its search for accuracy in expression on the one hand, and in construction on the other. In both cases the motive was the same, increasing anxiety to arrive at definite and ascertainable laws. It may, however, be some comfort to architects in our degenerate times to know that Blondel in a fine eulogy of Wren for his supreme mastery of the theory and practice of architecture, deplored the absolute neglect of scientific studies in the civil architecture of his own time.







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